THE
True History of the
Tragicke loves of
HIPPOLITO and ISABELLA
Neapolitans.
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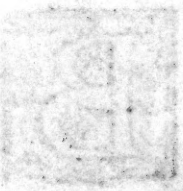
To the Volume.

BY ſale of all things,
humane and diuine,
Since all ſorts liue;
what ſelles liues ſacred line,
And with that life, the ſoule puts vnder Preſſe;
Me thinkes ſhould render rich Men, Midaſſes:
Here then th' Immortall ſoule is ſold, with life
Of two, by Loue made one, in Man and Wife.
Loue breedes Opinion, and Opinion, Loue,
In whoſe Orbs, all the liberall Sciences moone:
All which contracted in one Tragedy,
Sell (great Octauius; *) and* Auguſtus *be,*
In all worth, for thy ſale commoditie.

G. C.



THE TRVE HISTORY of the tragicke loues of *Hipolito* and *Isabella*, Neapolitans.

Mongst all the accidents that vsually draw men into the greatest admiration & astonishment, there are none so strange or prodigious as those which Loue produceth: A passion, or rather fury, so violent; as that, ouerthrowing the reason and vnderstanding of those it seazeth, it leaues them no consideration of the euent of what it makes them vndertake. And although

the examples of the warres, euerſions of Kingdomes and eſtates, with the errors it hath cauſed the wiſeſt men to commit, and the ruines into which it hath precipitated the greateſt Perſonages, be ſo ordinary as no man can be ignorant of them; yet wee finde ſcarce one that will make the right vſe of them; neuertheleſſe, they ought to be knowne, to the end that ſome more happy than the reſt, may by the repreſentation of others miſeries, be diuerted from falling into the like. Amongſt the chiefeſt where this paſſion hath diſplaied her tragicall effects; This of which I now vndertake to write, deſerues a remarkable place.

Italy hath beene in all times a region fertile in high and noble ſpirits, and capable of the greateſt and fulleſt fruits of vertue or vice, and alſo the moſt amorous and ſubiect to loue of all other Nations: which hath beene the occaſion

that the men (finding this inclination so common and naturall to them) haue ordained the lawes for the liues of women so strict & seuere in their restraint, to which they subiect them, as not assured of their chastities without the interdiction of the sight and frequentation of men, excepting onely the conuersation of their neere allies. Now amongst all the Townes of *Italy*, where vertues and faire exercises are in greatest recommendation, and where is commonly the best and noblest company, *Naples* is one of the chiefe, and where there is a greater liberty then in other Cities of the Countrey. In this Citie there liued a Gentleman, *Fabritio* by name, who as well for the much desert of his vertues, as for the noblenes of his descēt, held the place of one of the most honoured Magistrates of the Citie; In which charge he so wel demeaned himselfe, and got himselfe so good a reputa-

tion, as hauing buried one Wife, hee married a ſecond, of birth and meanes much aboue his owne: for though both Nature and Fortune had yeelded him enough, yet they both had more aduantaged her than him. This Woman by name *Linia*, had to her firſt Husband a Lord of the beſt bloud of the Countrey, who left her two children, the eldeſt named *Pompeio*, the other *Cornelio*. *Fabritio* had by his firſt Wife amongſt other children a daughter named *Iſabella*, the which beſides an excellent beauty with which ſhe was adorned, was endowed with ſo great an vnderſtanding, as ſhe ſeemed not onely to ſurpaſſe thoſe of her age, (which was then about fifteene or ſixteene yeares) but to leaue ſhort of her, all thoſe that euer nature had produced excellent of her ſex, in ſuch ſort as ſhee was eſteemed and admired of all as the wonder of her time. And that which

yeelded

yeelded her more luſter, was a certaine braue and proud faſhion, but ſuted with a ſweetneſſe agreeable to her age and condition, that made her loued and feared both at once. Thoſe whom Nature hath giuen to taſte the ſweetneſſe of a fatherly loue, may imagine what pleaſure and contentment Signiour *Fabritio* receiued in being father of many hopefull children, eſpecially of ſo rare a treaſure as this daughter, being withall fauoured with ſo great an increaſe of fortunes, and conuenience (by this ſecond marriage) to breed & more highly aduance his children, and chiefly his *Iſabella*: for whom he & his wife *Liuia* had deſigned a marriage with *Pompeio* (her eldeſt Son by her firſt Husband) who of her part alſo was moſt glad to haue ſo happily found for her ſelfe ſo good a Daughter, & her Son ſo faire a Wife, breeding her more carefully then if ſhe had been her naturall childe. The

good and commendable proiect of this marriage being agreed on by theſe Parents, and whereon they built the principall happineſſe of their houſe and family, brought them much more ruine then it had promiſed them contentment; being the ordinary pleaſure of fortune to build vpon the foundation of our deſignes, euents moſt contrary to our hopes. This Maid to whom the greatneſſe of her wit (with her knowledge of Letters) did aduance the diſcourſe of her ſoule to the iudging of things farre aboue her ſex, or what her age might ſeeme to beare, did make her alſo diſdaine that which ſhe thought vnworthy of her faire parts, beſtowing her time more on priuacy than conuerſation, partly in ſtudie, partly in Muſicke; ſometime marrying with her Inſtrument her voyce which ſhe had perfectly ſweet; ſometime vſing her Needle in working ſome rare ſtorie or curi-

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ous Hieroglifique, that euery thing might be a witneſſe of the well-ſpending of her time.

Being arriued at the ſeauenteenth yeare of her age, ſhe had notice giuen her by her father of her appointed huſband, with much diſcourſe of the ſence ſhe ought to haue of ſo good a fortune. To which ſhe made ſuch anſwer, as a Father may expect from ſuch a daughter; who beſought him onely to leaue yet awhile ſome liberty to her youth, and time to frame her ſelfe to the obedience of a Husband.

Liuia being diſcreet and wiſe, and knowing many imperfections in her Sonne, had left him to abide euer ſince her marriage in a Countrey houſe of hers, ſome eight or ten miles from *Naples*, where ſhe kept diſcreet and well-faſhioned people about him, to the end to correct and ſome way amend the ill habits of his minde and body, for cer-

tainly he was borne vnpleasing to the eye, and very vncapable of any thing gentle or vertuous: but as it is vnpossible to ouercome so great an enemy as Nature, (which though you beat from you, yet will returne againe) so proued the care of his Mother, and the paine of those about him most vnprofitable to this young man, who hauing attained to the age of twenty two yeares, was then aduertised by his Mother of her intention for his mariage, of which the beauty of this faire Maid made him so greedily desirous, that after his first sight of her, he had no disposition to be from his Mistresse, who then began to looke better vpon him then she was woont to doe before she knew her Fathers pleasure. So frequentation made her know him, and her knowledge of him to disdaine him: her disdaine bred hatred, her hate despaire, and despaire those strange resolutions in her that you

ſhall hereafter vnderſtand. In this time an Vncle of hers, called *Hipolito*, was returned home from *Bolonia*, where he had remained foure or fiue yeares, as well to ſtudy, as to learne Horſmanſhip, Fenſing, Muſicke, and other commendable parts befitting a Gentleman, in which hauing beſtowed himſelfe to the age of one or two and twenty yeres, his elder Brother (who aſſumed the office of a Father) thought it fit to call him home to aduiſe with him of the ſetling of his eſtate.

This young man being returned to *Naples*, faire mannered, handſome, that knew to dreſſe himſelfe well, and whoſe ſpeech was graceſull and pleaſing, was foorthwith knowne and affected of all, but chiefly of his Neece, with whom (as well through the affinity of their natures and yeares, as of their bloud) he was receiued into that peculiar degree of friendſhip and primacy, as

as if he had been her Brother; yea more, they had ſo great a communication and mutuall relation each with other, as they were growne to eſteeme it an iniury to themſelues not to make each maſter of the others neereſt thoughts. They had not long liued in this faſhion when the young Maid acquainted him with her appointed marriage, and her little affection to it, complaining much of the cruelty of her fortune, and the ſeuere reſolution of her Father to couple her with a man ſo ill ſuting her in euery thing, and who (ſetting aſide the aduantage of his birth and meanes) had nothing in him remarkable.

The company of this Vnckle of hers increaſed ſtill her diſdaine againſt her louer, by the approoſe hee gaue of her opinion of the others wants, whoſe company annoyed them both more then they were pleaſed with, in ſuch ſort, as they ſought all meanes to free them-

themſelues of it, and retire to reading and other mutuall pleaſures betweene themſelues. But as it is eaſie and moſt ordinary for extremities euen in vertuous things to ſlip into vices; ſo this excellent friendſhip could not long containe it ſelfe within the bounds and limits of his duty, but growing to a farther liberty by their priuate frequentation, began to be accompanied with a certaine vnmeaſured doting vpon this retiredneſſe, and a melancholy paſſionate griefe in abſence each of the other, and a loathing of all other company, and in concluſion, (it being the cuſtome of their age to diſcourſe of loue more then any other ſubiect) loue ſo mingled with them, that it became the maſter of both their hearts. And although their yeares had as yet giuen them little practiſe in this affaire, and that feare tooke from him, and ſhame from her, the ordinary meanes of declaring their affections

affections; yet the quickneſſe of both their apprehenſions made them both ſoone acquainted with their reciprocall paſſions. Which incouraged *Hipolito* one time among the reſt, to take this aduantage of a diſcourſe they had had of loue, and the thraldome his ſubiects liue in, and ſpeake to this purpoſe.

Certainly Neece I haue read a maxime which I now receiue for purer truth then heretofore, that men cannot rightly iudge or diſcourſe of the true quality of any paſſion without hauing had ſome triall or feeling of it himſelfe, and whereas I haue diuers times with your ſelfe and others, inforced in my diſcourſes what I had read and heard of the ſtrange effects of loue, and how there is no paſſion nor any part of the ſoule that yeelds not to it, and that reaſon and prudence are able to make but weake reſiſtance againſt it, yet I muſt confeſſe I ſpeake rather for arguments

ments ſake, then beleeuing in the trueth of what I related, eſteeming indeed, that affect the eaſieſt to gouerne and hide of moſt others. But I muſt now confeſſe all true, and much more then I could haue ſaid or can, that might expreſſe the admirable effects that loue produces, and ſtrong hand it holds ouer our reaſonable part.

How now Vncle! (anſwered ſhee) will the lawes of our friendſhip allow this, that you haue thought one thing, and ſpoken another to me? Pardon me Neece (anſwered *Hipolito*) it hath not beene that I would barre you of any thought in my boſome, nor that I would, or alas could hide this from you; feare onely hath denied mee the libertie. Neither thinke (I beſeech you) that I would any way offend you, or faile in the leaſt cauſe of a friends dutie, but rather double my reſpect and obſeruance, as the ſubiect and cauſe is increaſed;

increaſed; and will beleeue that the occaſion of this diſcourſe is happened mee by fate, to remooue my feare, and giue you ſome occaſion to approoue the power of this deitie in mee, whom of a free man it hath made a captiue, and inſtead of that Vncle and friend, I haue beene hitherto to you, your ſeruant and vaſſall; and turned all my free thoughts into ſo deuoted an obſeruance, that they haue no will left to will any thing but obedience to your thoughts, to honour you, to deſire you, and laſtly, to make me ſo acceptable to you, as to bee by you, onely eſteemed worthy your affection.

The teares and earneſt ſighes that accompanyed theſe words, ſtayed them there, and made her no leſſe amazed at their vnexpected nouelty; then troubled and doubtfull, what anſwere ſhee might fitteſt make to them: the conformitie of her paſſion of the one ſide

more

more then halfe yeelding, and of the other, her maiden baſhfulneſſe drawing her with no leſſe violence backe; at laſt after a little ſilence, the witneſſe of ſome change in her thoughts, quoth ſhe, I doe now finde it true that I haue heard wiſe people ſay; that a vertuous and faire appearance often couers a vitious deſigne; and for this reaſon, if ſolitude had not beene ordained to our ſexe, I had ſo diſpoſed of my ſelfe, as to ſhunne the vnhappy conſequence, which ordinarily (by my obſeruation) follow the ſocietie and haunting with men, euen thoſe that opinion rankes amongſt the honeſteſt, but you I thought ſo innocent of diſſembled purpoſes, and all your courſes ſo led by vertue, as nothing but your ſelfe could haue perſwaded mee (I being what I am) you would haue intended any thing againſt that which I ſhall euer hold deerer then my life. I ſee the too much

much neerenesse I haue allowed you, giues the bouldnesse to take this aduantage, (or it may be the gueſsing me too eaſie,) to trie and know the diſpoſition of my humour, it being otherwayes impoſſible you ſhould attempt the honour of one ſo neere you, as nature binds you to the preſeruation of it; but ſince it is thus, I hope hereafter to let you better ſee, I deteſt theſe things, and neither your ſubtiltie nor company pleaſe me.

Thoſe which being young beginners in loue, haue to an extreame paſſion, receiued ſuch a refuſall, may conceiue the anguiſh this anſwere brought to poore *Hippolito*; who thought he heard a ſentence againſt his life; and looſing colour, ſpeech, and vnderſtanding, remained a good while without ſpeaking, at laſt returning to himſelfe as from an extacy, with a trembling voyce, as full of ſighes as words, hee made this anſwere.

were. If my fortune haue led me to an enterprize so harmefull to my selfe, and to you so offensiue; your perfections, the diuine force of loue, or my cruell destinies, not my will must be accused; which hath but by violent necessitie offended you. O be satisfied with the infinitie of those other miseries that I see prepared for me, without adding to them the priuation of your company, and leaue mee yet the short comfort of that trouble, whereof I hope ere long, by the end of my life to deliuer you, & my selfe by the same meane, from the punishment of my rashnesse, the which I earnestly beseech you not to imagine to haue beene guided by any craft or subtiltie. I haue all my life had this vice of dissimulation in too great a horror to bee able now to vse it; especially with you, towards whom (though it were familiar to me) yet the lawes of my affinitie and loue would forbid it

mee. Beleeue mee, truth accompanies my wordes; and the reſpect of your honour, my intentions: which haue no other end then the aſſurance of your fauour, and of a more particular affection then friendſhip may diſpence with you to beare to another: tis no breach of your honour that I pretend vnto; nor more then I will hope you may thinke belongs to me, being but ſo farre a preferring me before others, as the obligation of nature, and our vowed friendſhip makes to become due to me.

He was beginning to ſay more, when one came to call them to ſupper; ſo as *Iſabella* had onely leiſure to tell him, that ſhe was to heare no more of thoſe matters: which thruſt him yet farther into deſpaire; by which occaſion, and the many teares hee had ſhed, his face was ſo changed, that hee was faine to perſwade his brother and ſiſter in law, that hee was not well, ſo excuſing himſelfe

ſelfe for not ſupping, he went to a houſe of another of his brothers, a Notary, a rich man, and there lodged with another fourth brother named *Scipio* ſomewhat elder then himſelfe, where hee lay with opinion of euery one that hee was ſicke as hee ſeemed, and remooued his brother from his chamber, to the end to enioy more fully the libertie of his plaints and paſſions, which all the night held him in ſuch vnreſt, as he not onely ſlept not, but fell into a feauer, a fit bodily diſguiſe for the affliction of his minde. Hee lay foure daies contending in his reaſon, with loue for the maſtery: and to beate him from the hold hee had got in him, but alas, what reſiſtance can men make againſt gods? Hee was already in the ſnare, which the more hee ſtrugled to get free of, ſtill the faſter held him, and was forced backe to the purſuit of his vnfortunate loue. Hee reſol-

ued to take more courage, and to write to his mistresse, since hee had neither meanes nor assurance to see her.

She was no lesse diuided, by as great a ciuill warre of loue, sometimes accusing her selfe of ingratitude, sometimes of crueltie, for casting him shee loued best of all worldly things, into so great a dispaire; of this she would excuse her selfe vpon a greater fault, that shee had too easily receiued the first offer of his seruice, whom diuine, humane, and the lawes of publique honesty, had forbidden her.

In the meane time *Hipolito* was often visited by his brother *Fabritio*, and had speech with him of the marriage of *Pompeio* with his daughter, which hee seemed much to approoue of, wisely dissembling his griefe, and offring *Pompeio* his seruice in all good offices to his mistresse, for which he hourely importuned him. Amongst these passages,

Hipolito's foote-man, fit enough for such imployments, brought *Isabella* a letter from his master, faining to bee one y sent to inquire of her health. The fellow being gone, shee retired into her chamber, and read the letter, which was to this purpose.

IF I had left me any power to command my desires, I might bee content to discourse only with my selfe, of the sufferings of my most vnhappy condition, without importuning you with the view of my afflictions; but since loue hath inforced the subiection of all my will to his lawes, and your seruice, pardon mee (I beseech you) if inforced by both these, I flie to your pitie, which I implore with all the vowes of my soule, as the onely helpe and meane left mee to escape a neuer ending torment. Though it bee vneasie to you, yet you owe it him, who honours you aboue all worldly things, and adores you as the onely modell

of all excellence here below: who liues not but by you, nor deſires life but for you, and to bee ſo happy, as to ſpend it in your ſeruice, to which I am ſo vowed, as heauen ſhall as ſoone bee falſe as I alter this reſolution. Accept, if you pleaſe, this deuotion, and gouerning it by what lawes you ſhall thinke fit, make your ſelfe of it what aſſurance my life or death can yeeld you, and let not cruelty which findes ſome limits, euen in them to whom it is proper and peculiar, bee a perpetuall blot to your faire vertues, in not ſuffering me to finde that mercy at deaths hand, that I may not at your.

A weake perſwaſion will carry a diuided and doubtfull minde, to that part whither it ſelfe inclines; ſo theſe letters finding her leaning more to loue then dutie, forced her through all the doubts that could oppoſe themſelues, and after ſome diſcourſe with her ſelfe, of

ſuch differing accidents in thoſe occurrences as her able vnderſtanding ſet before her; reaſon at length gaue place to loue, and reſpect to paſſion; but with this reſolution, not to engage her honour, or by any thing confeſſe her purpoſe, till the laſt ſhe could poſſibly delay it to; and the next morning ſhee ſent this following anſwere.

IF I had not by all the points of a faithfull obſeruance, aſſured you of as perfect a friendſhip as you can deſire of me, I ſhould allow the complaints of your letter; being incident to euery good diſpoſition, to deſire a friendſhip with his kindred; or if our caſe were ſuch as wee might expect the end their deſires looke to, who ſeeke the vnion of their liues, by the holy knot of a lawful loue, I ſhould receiue that paſſion you complaine to ſuffer for my ſake, as a moſt aſſured teſtimony, of the worthy opinion you held of mee, to

whom you would permit your selfe to addresse such an affection; but since I am assured of the one, and cannot hope any thing of the other; I aduise you restore your selfe to reason, that you may condemne (as you ought) your grieuings for their vnfitnesse, your passions as licentious, and beyond the bounds of your part; and to shew you that pitie hath in mee an equall place with friendship, since you put your selfe vpon the rules of my discretion, I beseech you lay from you your vniust griefes, and impossible hopes, and expect from me, onely all the effects of a most solid, and most perfect friendship, such as my honour, and what I am to you, can bestow vpon you; in so doing, you shall finde my faith constant aboue the least change, that any thing of this world can indeauour to make in it. This I promise; this I sweare to you; and coniure you to be contented with this vtmost I can doe, and not seeke to intice my

affection

affection beyond the bounds of my duty, assuring my selfe in so reasonable a suite, your desires will agree with mine. I will lastly, intreat you to bee well, that I may sodainely receiue the pleasure of your company.

This letter was better Physicke to *Hipolito's* disease, then all the Physitians of *Naples* could giue him, which hauing read ouer, and ouer, infinitely often, hee was much troubled on what resolution to settle himselfe, and as a minde possest with desire, is euer therewith accompanied with feare, so did he giue so diuers interpretations to the letter, as not a word in it, but hee made to suffer a double vnderstanding, sometime taking it for generall and indifferent words, sometime gathering somewhat thence to his owne aduantage: after many discourses of his fantasie, hee resolued at last on the better part,

and

and hope making him take heart, began by that meane to recall his health ſo well, as that within two dayes, leauing his chamber, hee went to viſit a ſiſter of his, a Nunne, betweene whom and him, by reaſon of the ſimpathie of their natures, there was an extraordinarie loue and amitie.

This Nun, vnderſtood but too much for her profeſſion, and was then of the age of thirtie fiue yeeres, hauing more exerciſed her wit about honeſt affaires of the world (as farre as the reſtraint of a Cloiſter might ſuffer her) then in the ſtrict obſeruance of the duties of her order.

The Lady *Iſabella* her Neece, had often leaue to goe to that Monaſtery, as well to heare the Seruice, as to ſee her Aunt, and learne of her to worke curious workes with the Needle, which ſhe much affected.

Shee was glad to ſee her brother ſo well

well amended, and hauing made him ſit, and diſcourſing of his ſickeneſſe, ſhe blamed the ſtrictneſſe of her condition, that had denied her the meane of viſiting him, as otherwiſe ſhe would haue done, if the Lawes ſhee liued vnder would haue permitted her. To which, finding hee made no anſwere, but ſate immoderately ſighing; ſhe added, certainely Brother, either it is your ſickeneſſe hath ſo ſtrangely altered you, that I may ſay, I ſcarce know you, or you haue ſomewhat in your minde, that you will keepe to your ſelfe, that makes you ſo melancholy, as may hazard the caſting of you downe againe, if you take not heede. You know there is no diſeaſe more dangerous then that of the minde, the Phyſitians haue no Receipt, nor Apothecaries any Drugge, that may auaile to heale it: the beſt thing for it, is the aduice of a faithfull friend, and where can you expect it more faithfull, then

then from me, who you know haue not onely loued you aboue my other Brothers, but euen before my ſelfe. I beſeech you by that inuiolable, and more then ſiſterly loue, make mee a partner of your ſufferings; vpon this aſſurance that you ſhall finde mee ſecret, ſeruiceable, and aſſiſting you to all you can deſire; diſpiſe not a vailed head, as an vnprofitable thing that cannot giue you comfort equall with others more conuerſant in the world. Deere Siſter (anſwered *Hipolito*) my affection to you is built vpon too ſure a foundation to bee ſhaken, or indangered by any earthly accident, nor haue I euer doubted of the abilitie of your vnderſtanding, but my deſpaire of remedy to my affliction, takes from me all will to giue it you; for giue me good Siſter, and ſince you can in nothing helpe, let mee alone endure the penance of my idle thoughts. How? (anſwered ſhe)

where

where is the resolution you men attribute to your selues aboue the courage of women? Certainely, your part of it is very little, that you dispaire of executing, before you attempt the meanes; if your owne inuention doe not presently giue you a smoothe way to your desires, you must not therefore thinke that others cannot finde it out for you, the fullest vnderstandings, in their owne affaires are distrustfull, and for feare of loosing themselues, doe often repaire to the faith of a friend for their resolution. If I can serue in nothing else but to keepe your griefes for you, it is no little lightning to a heauy and oppressed heart, to leaue his vexations with those he knowes, will affectionately imbrace all, to take but a part from him. The principall effects of friendship, are helpe and consolation; though I bee vnusefull for the one, yet am I most fit for the other, and I hope able

for

for both. God often times raiſes the meanes of our reliefe beyond our hope, and from thoſe we leſt expect it: deere Siſter (anſwered he) out of the meere dutie of my loue, and no hope at all of any allay to my griefes; I will tell you their ſubiect, which ſhame ought ſtill as much to conceale, as reuerence to the lawes of Nature, ſhould haue at firſt forbidden. Know (deere Siſter) I haue beene ſo long engaged, that now in deſpight of my beſt oppoſitions, I am conſtrained to giue my ſelfe vp to the loue of our Neece *Iſabella*. This hath beene, and is the occaſion of my anguiſh, and muſt ſo remaine as long as my vnhappy fate ſhall allow mee life: behold the laborinth of my paines, and the little meanes I haue to get out, ſince I am already gone on ſo farre. With this he tould her the diſcourſe of all had paſt betweene them, ſhewing her the letters he had writ, and her anſwers to them.

them. To which his Siſter ſaid, I finde now that one of the greateſt faults that the Anciẽts haue made in the picture of Loue is in blinding his ẽyes, for though he indifferently diſperſeth his ſhafts amongſt all ſorts of creatures, yet the eie was neuer againſt this effect, and in that reſpect they needed not haue blindfolded him, but this marke I ſee belongs better to thoſe whom hee hath once touch't, and whom he leaueth not onely blinde in body, but euen eſtranged from all due conſiderations of the minde, ſo much as they remaine inſenſibly confuſed and loſt in themſelues, without ability to make vſe of their owne vnderſtandings.

Oh how truely was it ſaid of that Phyloſpher, that for the moſt part wee make things difficult and impoſſible to our ſelues for want of courage to vndertake them! Make your ſelfe (Brother) iudge of this in your ſelfe, who

vpon

vpon the first difficulty that affronts you in your designe, remaine astonished and confounded. You loue a Lady that is vpon the point of marriage with another. There are many marriages intended, yet so croſt, as they neuer arriue to their conſummation: and though that muſt be, yet were not that the worſt that might happen you; marriage often bringing conuenience to loue. Next, you loue one that you cannot marry? Well?. and hath loue no other ends for his contentment, then marriage? ſince it as often diſcouers affections as it ioynes them, while being ſubiected to the lawes of an obligation and dutie, you diſarme him of his cheefeſt forces. A wife (though neuer ſo faire) is like a gueſt, or the raine that becomes a trouble in three dayes.

But you will ſay, I loue one whom the lawes doe forbid me both all deſire and all hope to enioy, which ſo diſtracts

me

me in this thornie way, as I am there ruined with the impoſſibilitie of getting out. You are not the firſt that haue vndertaken things as much forbidden, which haue yet attained to a happie end. Thinke vertue conſiſts in great and difficult things, and is pleaſed in a reſiſtance, and the more paine and difficultie there is in an affaire, the more glorie followes the enterprize, and pleaſure the execution : the attempt may content you, whether you gather the deſired fruits of your paines, or fall vnder an impoſſible enterprize, and where your fortune failes you, not your courage. In ſumme, you ſtand not in ill tearmes. I find in theſe Letters ground enough to build hope enough on: leaue the gouernment of this buſineſſe to me; it may be I ſhall giue you a better account then you expect of it. Be you of good cheere, goe ſee your Miſtreſſe, and procure her repaire hither vpon our *La-*

vpon the first difficulty that affronts you in your designe, remaine astonished and confounded. You loue a Lady that is vpon the point of marriage with another. There are many marriages intended, yet so croſt, as they neuer arriue to their consummation: and though that must be, yet were not that the worſt that might happen you; marriage often bringing conuenience to loue. Next, you loue one that you cannot marry? Well? and hath loue no other ends for his contentment, then marriage? since it as often disseuers affections as it ioynes them, while being subiected to the lawes of an obligation and dutie, you disarme him of his cheefest forces. A wife (though neuer so faire) is like a gueſt, or the raine that becomes a trouble in three dayes.

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dies day to heare the Veſpers, and faile not to be here your ſelfe.

All theſe faire promiſes of the Nunne wrought little in her Brothers beleefe; onely they ſo farre reſtored him to himſelfe, as that commending his loue to her care, with more affection then he would haue done his life, he returned to his Brother the Notaries houſe till the next day after dinner, when hee went to ſee *Fabritio*, and (vnder that pretence) his Daughter *Iſabella*, where he receiued the gladdeſt welcome from Brother, Siſter, Neece, and Signiour *Pompeio* that might be. That afternoone paſt in the diſcourſe of his ſickneſſe, and how much euery one ſuffered for him. Euening being come, hee returned home, deferring the ſpeech with his Neece till next day, which was our *Ladies* Eue, when he was to dine with his Brother *Fabritio*, and *Pompeio* ſhould be gone home. He then intreated

ted her to go the next day to the Nuns to Veſpers, if ſhe could get leaue, which ſhe eaſily obtained: her Mother in law being ſicke, and accompanied with an old Gentlewoman her neighbour. She carried with her onely her Maid *Iulia*, in whom ſhe wholly affied.

This commoditie gaue *Hipolito* a preſage of his good fortune, and her the firſt danger of her ruine, whereof ſhe had ſome apprehenſion at her departure; for getting vp into the Coach, a weakneſſe ſeized her, with a head-ache, and a cold ſweat all ouer her bodie, and hauing been a while in the Coach, the Horſes that vſed before times to be quiet enough, began to ſtart, and ruſh one vpon the other, with ſuch force and confuſion as droue the Coachman into danger of his life, who had much a doe to bring them into order againe. Theſe accidents not a little affrighted the vnderſtanding of the vnfortunate

Ladie: but the force of our deſtinie violently driues vs to what is fatally ordained to vs; ſo theſe things could nothing hinder her from the perſuit of her misfortunes, in ſpight of all the contradictions of either her feare, or reaſon.

Being arriued at the Nunnerie, ſhee found her Vncle and her Aunt walking together in a Garden, there attending her comming, who aſſoone as they had perceiued her, and ſeeing her paler then ſhe vſed to be, her Aunt ſaid to her; Certainly Neece you haue not brought your beſt lookes hither, me thinks you are afraid of ſhaming my Brother, and therefore will partake with his ſickly lookes. Then *Iſabella* told them what had happened her in her comming, and occaſioned that feare which perhaps her lookes had ſtill retained.

Well then (ſaid the Nunne) ſince ye are both of you ill at eaſe, my counſaile is,

is, that ye repoſe your ſelues, and diſpence with to daies deuotion. *Iulia* and I will go heare the Veſpers for you. No good Aunt (ſaid *Iſabella*) I came not here to ſee your Garden; I will go heare ſeruice with you and I thinke my Vncle is here for the ſame purpoſe too. God will be no leſſe pleaſed (anſwered the Nunne) with your wills, and perhaps more, then if ye did what might preiudice your healths. The Diuines ſay, that although in the affirmatiue precepts of pietie one be not alwaies buſied in the action affirmatiue, yet that the ſight alone ſufficeth: in precepts negatiue, the troth is, we muſt be conuerſant, and bent to the action negatiue. Stay here, ſtay, I will take your ſinne vpon me; and with that went away, carrying *Iulia* along with her. Well Neece (ſaid *Hipolito*) let vs ſtay then, ſince it is my Sifters counſaile, and taking her by the hand, led her to ſit

vnder a hanging roofe couered with Gelſomines and Musk-Roſes, and gan to ſpeake to her in this ſort.

If euer man had reaſon to praiſe Heauen, it muſt be I, for the happineſſe I now receiue in this meanes offered me, to returne you my due humble thankes for the honour of your Letters in my ſickneſſe: and to vnfold the thoughts of my ſoule to you; to the end that comprehending them better then heretofore you haue ſuffered your ſelfe to do, you will daine to receiue my griefes and relieue them. I beſeech you then take my words in that good part that my affection deſerues, and with ſuch pitie of my afflictions as your goodneſſe ought to moue you to. I will not importune you with the repetition of any my former diſcourſes, you may haue remembred enough to found your determination vpon, and to know the bounds of mine intentions ſo limitted,

as

ted, as that I nor pretend, nor deſire ought of you that is not in all honeſtie and honour permitted: nor more then a preheminence of affection, ſuch as loue may ſtabliſh in a heart, that is, to giue the fruits to others, for whom they are by the ſuperſtition of our lawes, and their fauourable deſtinies more happily reſerued. All I deſire is, that as all my thoughts are dedicated and vowed to the ſeruice, honour, and loue of the heauenly vertues of your ſoule, and all my wiſhes but to be acceptable to you; yours may ſo farre anſwer them, as to ſet all other friendſhip and affections behinde mine, & ſo farre diſtinguiſh my portion in you from other mens, as not to receiue them in compariſon or equalitie with me. Pay me no more then for Gods ſake with the loue of a Neece, which may be common to many more; and iudging aright of my deuotions, receiue them, ſince they tend not to

your preiudice, nor to any thing vnlawfull or interdicted.

I had thought Vncle (anſwered *Iſabella*) I had ſo ſatisfied you by my Letters, as you had remained as well content as you haue cauſe to be, and that your reaſon had had the power to diſperſe thoſe vaine fantaſies that had clouded your iudgement; but for ought I ſee, the worke is new to begin: would to God I had beleft thoſe preſages that ſhould haue diuerted me from comming to this place to enter anew into our wonted conteſtations. I know (Vncle) that all deſires tend vnto the end of their contentment. You ſay that that of your loue is fixed vpon the ſoule, and thoſe perfections which you make your ſelfe beleeue mine is accompanied with. Theſe are ſtill for ought I can perceiue thoſe firſt diſſembled proteſtations, by which thoſe that are ſeized with your paſſion, are woont to abuſe

abuſe ſuch as they finde eaſie of beleefe, and within the bounds whereof they determine not to keepe themſelues: and though there might be found ſome men ſo diſcreet as would be content to be ſo limited, yet loue ſtill being become their maſter, and hauing taken from them all power of ruling and bounding their will, and bowing it to the appetites of the bodie (which is moſt conuerſant with vs) it ſoone wearies the wit and ſpirit with the contemplation of things ſeperated from humanitie, and drawes it to the purſuit of thoſe delights and pleaſures, to which our ſences and appetites doe leade vs. Doe you not know that the brands or Torches which they paint in *Cupids* hands betoken his double and different effects? for as the light of the fire pleaſeth the eies, and reioyceth vs when we behold it onely, and not feele the heate too neere vs; but when it comes to burne vs,

vs, we ſuffer then the hurt of that thing that before ſo much delighted vs; euen ſo Loue hath his beginnings pleaſing, becauſe he doth not at firſt poſſeſſe and take vp the diſcourſe of our reaſon, and repreſents nothing to vs for a while but the ſweetneſſe of a felicitie and contentment which he ſets before vs, and makes vs eaſily hope for: but when hee hath once ſeized vs wholly, as hee takes his poſſeſſion, hee dazels vs with the alluring appearances of his pleaſures, and putting vs into the middeſt of his flame, melts and makes to waſte from vs all the freedome of our reaſon and iudgement that wee had before. It were better therefore (good Vncle) you draw back the firſt foot you haue ſet into it, before the other follow it, and faile you too, and not to deſire of me what I can neither giue, nor you ought to pretend vnto. You know I am vpon the point of marriage: if ill hap diſcouer your addreſſes,

addreſſes (as time if you perſeuere cannot long hide them) you not onely ruine this my fortune, which brings mee profit, if not contentment, but with it my reputation; and be aſſured, if I giue you not a moſt ample content, it is not want of will but power.

This diſcourſe which *Hipolito* beleeued to come from a ſincere truth, and not mingled with diſſimulation, ſent him backe to his old feuer, and made him ſpeake thus. Neece, why ſhould you not conceiue my loue rather placed betweene *Hercules* and *Mercury*, that is, betweene Reaſon and Courage, as ancient Academies haue painted him, then betweene voluptuous pleaſure and vnfaithfulneſſe, where you ſeate him? Why, will you not allow him vertue for his obiect, before a baſe luſt, and which you forbid me too? Why, will you rather thinke me wicked and falſe, then ſuch as I am, and you haue reaſon

to

to iudge me? I could eaſily anſwer the ſcrupulous ceremonies of law with which you combate me. The holy Bible offers mee examples of ſuch, and things much farther in neereneſſe of alliance. The force of loue is diuine, and may iuſtifie vs againſt all ciuill or Eccleſiaſticall ordinances. But I will not goe ſo farre, nor alter the ſtile of my firſt language, or ouerthrow your marriage, much leſſe your reputation. I haue enough proteſted, but ſince ſo vnprofitably, I finde death muſt end my loue, and deſpaire; and I hope it will not be long firſt: I ſhall not be alone vnhappie, when like *Timageres* you happily will too late repent the ruine of your *Miletus*, and ſo reuenge vpon your owne ſelfe your crueltie. In ſpeaking this, the teares fell from his eies, and drew as many from *Iſabella*.

As they were taking new heart and ſpeech, the Nunne returned from her ſhort

ſhort Veſpers, and at the entrance of the Garden (to be freed from *Iulia*) gaue her her Pſalter, to deliuer her Maid, willing them to prouide ſome collation. And comming to her Brother and Neece, a little ſmiling, quoth ſhe: how now ſweet hearts, I am affraid you haue ſpent this time ill you are both ſo ſad, make mee a partner of your entertainments: though I be not ſo cunning as you worldlings, yet I am not ſuch an innocent as my habit ſpeakes me, I haue bookes ye know of other vſe then to the Church; nor am I altogether vnpractized in any thing; feare not to giue me your diſcourſe, for ſhould it be euen of Loue, I might be able to put in a word.

Of Loue Aunt (anſwered *Iſabella*) the deuotions and walls of a Cloiſter allow it no entrance.

What (anſwered the Nunne) can you that haue read ſo much be ignorant

rant of his effects, in the Temple of *Anubis*, in *Saturnes* Temple at *Alexandria*, or how little the ſtrict guard of *Danaë*, *Læda*, and many others, could preuent the powerfull workings of this God? There is nothing that his brands cannot fire, or his arrowes pierce; and I had ill ſpent my time in the houſe of your dead Mother, who was the woman I loued beſt in this world, and whoſe memory I doe moſt honour, if I had learned nothing of this.

My Mother Aunt (anſwered *Iſabella*) what can you ſay of her? I was not ſo bleſt as to ſee her in an age fit to iudge of her condition, but ſure ſhe died with a more faire and vnqueſtioned reputation, then (if her life and maners had not throughly deſerued it) this age wou'd haue giuen her.

Neece (anſwered the Nunne) nothing vndoth vs but indiſcretion: your Mother was happie in placing her fa-

uours

uours vpon a wiſe and reſpectfull Gentleman, and ſhe of her part was in nothing vnwarie. This preſerued her, and will keepe vp the honour and happineſſe of all that ioyne it with their loue. I will giue you the whole truth, for I ſaw it.

The yeare I was profeſt Nunne (it is ſome eighteene yeares ſince) the Marqueſſe of *Coria* was ſent to this Towne in buſineſſe of his Maieſties; he ſtayed here ſome ſeuen or eight moneths, beſtowing the time his great employments left him in the nobleſt exerciſes, and moſt worthy his qualitie; hee was ſome fiue and thirtie yeares old, and the moſt accompliſhed man that I euer ſaw. The Lords and Gentry to doe him honour, made him many feaſts, and there alwaies followed Balls, Maſques, Comedies, and other pleaſurable paſtimes, in which he would againe returne his thankes to them. He tooke much pleaſure

ſure in Maſques, for the priuiledge it gaue him of diſcourſing with Ladies. My eldeſt Brother was the man of this Towne he moſt affied in, and to whom he did moſt freely impart his negotiation; my Siſter the woman that pleaſed him beſt, finding her excellently faire, well graced, of a pleaſing diſcourſe, and an vnderſtanding aboue the reſt. This inclination grew to a loue, in which he gouerned himſelfe ſo well, and ſo well diſguiſed it, that he eſcaped all ſuſpition. He reſolued to impart it to my Siſter, but with ſuch fitneſſe as none but ſhee, or ſome moſt truſted woman ſhould know it. And knowing the common curioſity and ſudden ſuſpitions that ordinarily follow neere frequentations in thoſe kinds, might ſoone ruine his hopes, he retained ſtill his ordinary modeſt faſhion and ſeemings. But the Carneuall drawing neere, the Maſques and daunces were alſo more frequent,

frequent, and gaue him more conuenience to speake to her, & entertaine her as hee did; yet so disguized, as though hee was knowne to bee in the troupe, yet hee was vnknowne to all but her, to whom (finding, or presuming, that she was not displeased, hee should make more estimation of her then the rest) hee gaue a signe to know him by, which made the meanes of his approaches more easie. And after hauing enough by generall and doubtfull words, giuen her the chiefe end and aime of his desires, at last, hee reuealed himselfe wholly to her.

To bee short, his discretion so managed his affaire for him, as that helpt with the force of his vertue and nobleneſſe, (and the seruice of my Sisters Nurce, whom hee found meanes to gaine, and make the messenger of his letters) hee led my Sister to such composition, as that (conuenience and safe-

tie permitting) ſhee gaue him promiſe of ſight, and ſpeech with her in more priuacy. Such as are practiſed in *Italy*, and *Spaine*, vnderſtand well enough, what ſuch permiſſions doe promiſe to thoſe that women haue a will to fauour. To bring this to paſſe, there happened a very fit meane; which was the neceſſitie of an affaire of import for the Kings ſeruice, wherein hee was to ſend to *Rome* out of hand to his Holineſſe. The Marqueſſe (and the Counſell by his aduice) iudged my Brother, fitter then any other for this purpoſe; whereupon, ſooneas the Carneuall was ended, my brother made that voyage, where hee was fiue or ſixe weekes; in which time, the Marqueſſe taking the occaſion, found meanes to viſit my Siſter by night, following her permiſſion, which ſtretch't at length euen to the point, whither they ſay loue pretends; with ſuch continuance as that

euery

euery ſecond night he viſited her, without euer hauing bin diſcouered by any but my Siſters Nurce, who lay in her Chamber, and I in her inner Chamber, by reaſon of a ſickeneſſe I had, that made me leaue the Monaſtery a while, to bee the better tended in my Brothers houſe? And, who not being yet throughly recouered, ſlept not ſo ſoundly, but I ſometimes heard ſoft noiſes of doores, and murmures of words, which put me into a little ſuſpition, with ſome other things that I had already beene imployed about, which kept mee ſtill in doubt: In ſuch ſort, as one day I caſt out a word to my ſiſter; who ſo rebuked me, that I neuer after durſt ſpeake any more to her of it.

But neere vpon the time that my Brother was expected backe againe; ſhee offered occaſion of ſpeech with mee to that purpoſe, expreſſely coniuring mee to harbour no ſuch opinions

in my fantaſie, and not to frame any falſe and iniurious tales of her. I that loued, and honoured her more then any other thing, and had all the obligation of nature, and loue from her to make me doe ſo: gaue her all the aſſurances that ſhee could deſire, of what ſhee commanded mee, telling her by way of diſcourſe what I had ſeene here, which ſo ſatisfied her, ſeeing I had both ingaged my ſelfe, and had beſides a little knowledge of the world; as ſhe promiſed mee, if time gaue her proofe of the faith I profeſt her, ſhee would one day ſpeake more freely to me, then yet ſhe would, as afterward ſhe did, which ye ſhall heare.

But firſt ye muſt know, that my Brother being returned, this practiſe betweene them ceaſed, not their loues; but vertue was of both ſides ſo reciprocally obeyed, as their pleaſure, nor deſire, had not the power to carry them

them beyond the limits of reſpect, nor had they other commerce then by letters, and thoſe but ſeldome. Not long after Eaſter, the Marqueſſe hauing diſpatch't the affaires hee had in charge, was called home by the King his Maſter, which ſummons, honour, and duety both commanded him to obey. You may imagine, what an affliction was this eternall ſeparation, both of them deſpairing euer to ſee one another againe.

I will onely adde this for one of the rareſt, and moſt notable examples of diſcretion, and conſtancy in them both, that I thinke hath beene euer ſeene vpon the like occaſion: that in a feaſt which the Signory of the towne made him before his departure, whither the Ladies were inuited, and among the reſt my Siſter, whom he led in the *gran ballo*, or Meaſures, and in whoſe pauſes, or times of reſt, this ſad ſubiect ſerued

them, for entertainement, that neither there, in taking their leaues, nor here in this place where hee saw her afterwards (as if it had beene by chance, comming to bid our Abbesse farewell) none could euer by either of their faces, or gestures, perceiue any alteration in their mindes, or any appearance so differing from their accustomed fashion, as might giue any the least suspition of the truth. He being gone, and my Sister big with child, and drawing neere her time; she came hither to see me, and tooke of me the greatest assurances she could deuize of secrisie, of what I should receiue from her. Which I haue hitherto most inuiolably kept; and should still, had not this occasion plucke it from me, besides that, yee, and I owe an equall respect vnto her memory, and all other danger is long since past. She spake to me in this sort.

Sister, you may remember, when my

husband was imployed to *Rome*, wee had ſpeech together of a conceipt you had then taken; and I promiſed, ſo you would haue patience for the preſent, I would hereafter talke more freely to you. The occaſion is now come, that (hauing had many teſtimonies of your loue, though peraduenture, your youth might giue cauſe to queſtion your diſcretion) I ſhall repoſe my ſelfe vpon the aſſurances, and trialls that I haue had of your affection in the thing that more concernes mee then my life; aſſuring my ſelfe, it cannot light into more faithfull, more fit, or more ſafe hands then into yours.

Then ſhe relates to me, the loues of the Marqueſſe and her, and how the childe, with which ſhe was then great, was his, as hee knew, and not my Brothers; but becauſe ſhee was not aboue three weeks gone with child before my Brothers returne, it was eaſie to con-

ceale it. Neuertheleſſe, ſhee deſired the Marqueſſe ſhould know (as was agreed betweene them) what iſſue her great belly ſhould come to: which ſhee determined her ſelfe to doe, if God gaue her life, but if it pleaſed him by her death, to depriue her of the meanes, ſhee deſired me to diſcharge this office, and to this purpoſe; three dayes after ſhe ſhould be brought a bed, a Pilgrime ſhould come, faining to bee returned from Ieruſalem, bringing images, and other things of deuotion, and ſhould aske almes to make his voyage to Saint *Iaques* in *Spaine*: whom you ſhall find meanes (ſaid ſhee) to take into your chamber, and giue him this little cofer, whereof this is the key: there is in it a Iewell, his picture, and his letters, at the bottome of one of which, you ſhall write a ſonne, or a daughter, according as I ſhall be deliuered, and you ſhall ſo diſcharge him, without more words to

him.

him. If I die, you ſhall be freed of this trouble, and ſhall only keepe this boxe, which ſhe opened, and read his letters to mee, the beſt written I thinke, that euer were ſeene; the Iewell was this Diamond, which you haue ſo much deſired, and I haue euer promiſed you: ſhe gaue it mee at her death, in the preſence of my Brother to keepe for you till your Marriage.

Now you muſt note, that the Marqueſſe was to ſend ſome one of truſt to *Naples*, about the time of my Siſters lying in; who clad like a Pilgrime, ſhould temporize and diſſemble himſelfe for a time, in all but the place, where hee was certainely to bee found out, by thoſe hee ſhould bee ſent vnto from, though he knew them not. God would that ſoone after his arriuall, ſhe was deliuered of you, Neece, ſo happily, as ſhe had the meanes to ſee him diſpatch't her ſelfe. But ſhe left the cofer with

with mee ſtill, which I kept till her death, ſhee commanded mee to burne within a while after, all that was within it (as I did) and gaue me the Iewell (as I haue told you) the which my Brother beleeued, ſhe had had of her Borther the Biſhop of *Oſtia*, when ſhe went to ſee him on his death-bed, a little before her being with child of you.

Behold the trueth of the Hiſtory, to which I ſweare to you, I haue added nothing of my owne, but deliuered the ſimple trueth of all as it paſt; being one of the ſeldomeſt ſeene, and rareſt paſſages carried in this kinde, that I thinke hath beene lightly heard, or reade of; and by relation, whereof I hope I ſhall not haue diuerted, or ſlack either of you in the offices of that amitie, which the mutuall opinions of your neere alliance each to other hath engendered betweene you: and wherein (though ye may in trueth diſcouer

scouer the mistaking of your beleefes hitherto) yet your vertues, I know will smoothe ouer greater errours, for the honour of your house, and the memorie of so worthy a woman as she was.

Isabella through this discourse, faining to bee much displeased with her Aunt, said to her; pardon me (Aunt) if I bate you a little of the respect I bore you, to the end to giue the cinders of my dead Mother their due; which command mee to tell you that I hold the story you haue told, as repugnant to trueth, as all those that haue knowne her, haue euer iudged her actions conformable and obedient to vertue. And you can not more plainely forbid mee your conuersation, then by defaming the honour of one I owe so much to as a Mother.

No, no Neece, (said the Nunne) I pray you doe not thinke I haue discoursed any thing to you that is not

most

moſt true, or haue ſpoken at all to offend you, or blemiſh the honour of my dead Siſter, in the reuerence whereof (though you be her Daughter) you ſhall neuer exceed me. 'Twas by chance I fell into this diſcourſe, and vpon the occaſion your words gaue me, and vpon that aſſurance that ought to be betwixt vs, which I imagined too great to haue ſuffered any ſuch diſtruſts to haue ſtept betweene vs. The experience that the world and more yeares may giue you, will ſhew you, that ſuch, and ſtranger accidents than theſe, are nothing impoſſible: Although I muſt confeſſe, if I had imagined it would haue ſo much offended you, I had withheld my ſelfe from ſpeaking any thing of this matter.

I would not Siſter (ſaid *Hipolito*) for the better halfe of my life but you had brought me this vnexpected quiet, and drawne me out of the conflict my ſoule was

was in, and rebellion againſt mee, and my deſtinies againſt all my deareſt deſires, nay, againſt Heauen it ſelfe, for hauing plunged me into a gulfe of miſeries ſo deepe, as no other thing but the remedie this your diſcourſe may prepare for me, can deliuer me out of.

Behold (anſwered the Nunne) to what paſſe I am come; for my owne part, I hold you both deare, and loue you with ſo equal an affection, as I cannot make any diſtinction between you, and hauing at once pleaſed the one, and offended the other, I am as much afflicted with that diſtaſt, as glad of the other contentment. But, had I knowne the occaſion of theſe contrary motions, perhaps my ſmall vnderſtanding had prompted me to haue ſo fitly ſpoken, that I had remained equally accepted of you both.

I pray Aunt (ſaid *Iſabella*) let vs leaue this ill ſubiect; 'tis not onely to you

Neece (ſaid ſhe:) but to me deare Goddeſſe (anſwered *Hipolito*) who propoſing to my ſelfe from hence all my happineſſe, will beleeue that my Siſter is miraculouſly falne vpon this diſcourſe, to draw backe my life not from the graue, but (which is worſe) from the for-euer languiſhing griefes, whither the miſchiefe of my deſperate condition was leading me. Then began hee to diſcourſe anew of his loues, as if he had not yet imparted them to the Nunne, who the better to giue the laſt accompliſhment to this worke, had ſent word that her Neece was to ſup with her, and that the Coach ſhould not a wait her returne till the euening. She obſerued well the Maids countenance during *Hipolito's* diſcourſe, and beleeued her heart meant him no ill, though ſhe often interrupted him, as deſirous they ſhould beleeue the contrarie: in the end ſhe enforced her ſelfe to this ſpeech.

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Was it not enough that you had digreſt ſo much from what you ought, as to haue followed the direction of ſo vnreaſonable an opinion, and ſo farre preſumed as to haue thus often importuned mee, but that you muſt now be tranſported beyond the limits of modeſtie and your owne honour, in daring to lay open all this to her, before whom the leaſt thought of it ſhould make you bluſh? I beſeech you be ſatisfied with my patience, and your own impudence, without going farther.

The Nunne beleeuing ſhe ſaid this rather forced then heartily, interrupted her, ſaying, (Neece) ſcornes doe not alwaies ſit well vpon modeſt women, nor ought they to light indifferently vpon all thoſe that offer them their ſeruice: The honeſtie, birth, wit, iudgement, good faſhion, with other faire parts and vertues of ſuch as poſſeſſe them, ought to commend & make them more

more acceptable then others, leſſe remarkably accompliſh't; and ſhee that ſhould not make this difference, muſt deſerue to be thought without iudgement or vnderſtanding. You are not of that number; and the eſpeciall communication of your friendſhip with my Brother, ſhewes in what ranke you hold him. And now that you haue occaſion to iudge his, to you greater then euer, and more compleat, ſince his parts heretofore made you eſteeme him worthy your fauour, why muſt the increaſe and perfection of his loue be the diminution and end of yours? reſtore your ſelfe to your ſelfe, and doe not a thing ſo vnlike you; doe not (ſweet Neece) make him miſerable, whom you haue euer knowne honeſt and worthy of loue, nor pay the debt of the faithfull ſeruice he hath vowed to you, with a leſſe fauourable vſage then you were content to allow him when you owed

him

him leſſe. *Iſabella*, though ſhe made ſhew that theſe diſcourſes diſpleaſed her, and that ſhe beleeu'd the tale of her Mothers loues to be but a cunning impoſture of her Aunts, to draw her to her Brothers deſires, neuertheleſſe this ſerued for the firſt excuſe of their loues, and to cleare thẽ of thoſe difficulties which till now had diuided them; for in the end, led by her deſtinies, woone by her Aunts perſwaſions, with the oaths and aſſurances ſhe gaue her of the truth of her relation, and by the teares and coniurations of *Hipolito*, but chiefly by the force of loue, ſhe yeelded her ſelfe wholly to his power: for alas, how can a ſilly Maid maintaine her libertie againſt him who ſubdues all whom he will, and euen when he will to his yoke and ſubiection.

At laſt then, after ſuch ceremonies as likely paſſe in things of this kinde, *Hipolito* is receiued by *Iſabella* for her ſer-

uant, with ſuch contentment as onely thoſe may imagine who haue incountred the like happie ſucceſſes, but with condition that his loue ſhould be ſtill confined within thoſe diſcreet limits he had before offered, without forcing her permiſſion farther then her lookes and ſpeech ſhould giue him cauſe to hope. Theſe are leaues with which many couer the workings of their loues, to giue the more gloſſe to the colours of their intentions. But hee willingly receiues that law which inables him to make a greater, and he who deſires to haue a victorie, imbraces it vpon any conditions; vnder the hope, that being once maſter, his obedience lies in his owne hands. All this poore Maid could deſire, was ſworne and promiſed by her Vncle, with all the aſſurances could be giuen. So hauing ſupt, and the Coach being come, they tooke their leaues of the Nunne, with many thankes for the

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easie meane she had giuen them to establish their contentments, promising each to other an often meeting in that or other alike conuenient place. Some happie daies they enioyed to the full of their wishes, but as all things are subiect to mutabilitie; so neither could this happinesse long subsist, without some feeling of the inconstancie of fortune.

Fabritio presseth his Daughter to her marriage, beleeuing her Vncle his Brother no small part of the cause of the coldnesse of her inclination to it; thereupon he resolues to send him to *Padua*, to confirme those noble parts his education had begun in him, and tells him this his resolution; laying before him his youth, and how much it was yet too early to retire himselfe, and put an end to so faire beginnings, that it behooued him to goe yet further to exceed the vulgar; that his fortune was

to be built vpon extraordinary merits, ſince his owne meanes were not great; and that onely for ſo good purpoſes he ſhould make vſe of him, as of one that euer would reckon him one of his; and that though at *Naples* there was no want of honeſt exerciſes, yet they had not letters, the chiefe ornament and perfection of a Gentleman: beſides, that, the place of our birth is neuer ſo fit for our education as another.

Hipolito ſurpriſed with this vnexpected newes, was vnprouided of an anſwer, yet neither accepteth nor refuſeth it, but found ſome pretence to delay the time for a few daies. In the end, his dutie, his honour, his reaſon, and the reuerence hee bore his Brother made him conſent; but his deſire, his paſſion, his loue and contentment contradicted it: amid theſe doubts he went to aduiſe with his Siſter the Nunne, where hauing long waied all theſe conſiderations

tions, and finding that the reſpect and honour of his Miſtreſſe, was too ſtrong for any other argument for his ſtay, and the many accidents that might croſſe their contentments being to be feared; beſides, that his Brother the Notarie, of whom he depended, and who began a little to ſuſpect this buſineſſe, had abſolutely told him, that if he would euer hope for any thing from him, he was out of hand to obey the appointment of their elder Brother, which was for his good and aduancement; and that if he voluntarily reiected the well wiſhes of his friends, he ſhould finde himſelfe abandoned of them, and of all the hope of his fortunes. The Nunne (on the other ſide) perſwaded him, that the yeelding to his Brothers, beſides that it might be to him a ſtep to his better fortune, would be a no leſſe principall ſafety for the communication of his, and his Miſtreſ-

ſes deſires, it being hard and almoſt impoſſible that the firſt heat of their loues could be ſo cunningly couered, but that ſome flames would be perceiued, that it was not for him to hope to interrupt her marriage, and though he could, yet that he ſhould rather helpe it forward as the fitteſt meane to eſtabliſh their happineſſe, gaining thereby the liberty to ſee, haunt and communicate each with other, with all the priuacie they could deſire; that it was to be feared that time might open the eies of Signiour *Fabritio*, and his Wife, to ſee more then they would they ſhould, that after this marriage theſe feares would ceaſe, their actions being no more ſubiect to ſo much ouer-looking, the ſuſpition of the occaſion of thoſe hinderances being taken away.

Hipolito at length concluded vpon his iourney to *Padua*, and that a while after *Iſabella* ſhould conſent to the mar-

riage, without ſhowing any greater eaſineſſe then before; to remooue all ſurmize of her Vncles being any cauſe of her former backwardneſſe: without ſtaying then till *Fabritio* ſhould preſſe him againe, his Brother of himſelfe, vrges him for the meanes to accompliſh his will, promiſing him ſo well to employ his time and expence, as ſhould giue him contentment; this *Fabritio* receiues gladly.

The day before his departure, hee met his *Iſabella* at the Nunnery; there did their approaching ſeparation, giue all paſſage of both ſides to thoſe griefes, teares, and ſad compl'aints, that the violence of a mutuall Loue paſſion, might raiſe in the young heate of theſe Louers affection; there was Fortune hewen, and their Deſtinies accuſed of too exceſſiue a cruelty, for bringing on them ſo ſudden a night of parting, euen in the morning of their warme affecti-

ons. After that, their Eyes, Voyces, Lips, and Armes, had done their mutuall offices, and that the Nunne had comforted them, with the aſſurance of her continuall aſſiſtance; they confirmed againe the promiſes of their Loues, with the ſtrong pledges, of all the ſolemneſt Oathes they could deuize, inuoking all the execrations, and miſeries that Heauen, and Hell could lay vpon either of them that ſhould faile in the leaſt point, with proteſtation, that what euer other vow they ſhould make repugnant to theſe (which againe, and againe, they repeated) ſhould not bee by voluntary conſent, but forced, and conſtrained: and thereupon went and heard Maſſe together.

To the end, to write with more ſafetie each to other, they reſolued *Hipolito* ſhould incloſe his letters, within thoſe hee ſhould write to the Nunne, who ſhould

ſhould giue them to *Iſabella*, and returne him againe their anſwere. They coniured one another alſo, to beare the anguiſh of their abſence with patience, and ſo to command themſelues at parting, as no appearance of either ſide, ſhould breed any ſuſpition of their affection: which they did fitly enough; for *Hipolito* found meanes to ſpeake to his Brothers, and take leaue of them, and his Siſters in the abſence of his Neece, whom afterward hee met, as by chance going to her Chamber, and there tooke his leaue of her with little ſtay. Shee tooke onely leaſure to intreate him, that ſhee might ſee him before her marriage, which ſhe promiſed to ſend him word of.

Hee was no ſooner at *Padua*, which was in September, but hee cauſed to bee made a Mirhor of Chriſtall of the Rocke couered with gold, and in that, his Picture incloſed, the inſide of the couer,

couer, was ſealed vp with their cifer, or marke, which was in this forme [*S S.*] Without of one ſide was a Heart in the middes of a fire kindled by the beames of a Sunne, and blowne by a Cupid, with theſe wordes written about it; *Puro ardet & vno*: of the other ſide, was a burning Fire aſcending vpward, and Teares ſhowring on it, with theſe words; *Nec lachrymis, nec mergitur vndis*: and ſent it by his Laquey diſguiſed, directing it to the Nunne, with this letter following.

I Haue beene euer of opinion, that the paſſions of Loue had their effects, much more approaching to extreames, then all others, and their fruites farre aboue imagination, and diſcourſe. The deere proofe that now I haue, aſſures me of it. I haue as yet onely taſted the pleaſure one receiues in the ſight, of what he truely loues; and thereby, doe gueſſe at

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the perfection of that contentment, which possession yeelds. But I am at the present, so throughly afflicted with the priuation, of both the one and the other, as none but he that feeles it can imagine, nor though hee felt could expresse it. Yet I doe digest it with such patience, as it pleases the well come necessitie of so rare, and worthy a subiect to lay on me, willing to liue in sufferance, or rather to begge a languishing life of so beloued a remembrance, as is the representation of your faire Idea, assuring my selfe you will not altogether banish mine from your eyes, but bee pleased to entertaine likewise the memory of that seruant of yours, who will be euer so much yours, as Heauen shall as soone bee false, as he vnfaithfull: and doe not you (O my deerest) whose pure Soule, hath neuer produced action of crime, to these other base, and common ones; but like it selfe spotlesse, and Noble, doe not you (I beseech you) suffer it to

fall

fall vnder the ordinary effects of time, and abſence; but liue pleaſed to Loue him, who will liue adoring you, and from the heate of whoſe affection you haue already inkindled, and raiſed thoſe flames, which neuer can be extinct, or abated.

This letter being receiued by the Nunne, was foorthwith, deliuered together with the preſent to *Iſabella*; whom now *Pompeio* viſited with more frequencie then euer, being aſſured by his Father-in-law, and his Mother, that he ſhould marry her before the Carneuall next; the troubleſome importunities of theſe Parents, redoubled the griefe the young maide felt for the abſence of her *Hipolito*.

Al the eaſe ſhe found, was in thoſe often deuotions ſhe made at the Nunnery with her good Aunt, by whoſe helpe, ſhe cauſed to bee made her Picture, by an excellent Painter in a ſmall Oual, and got

got it incloaſed in a little Enameld boxe of gold, vpon one ſide of which, there were two Cupids Painted, houlding each in the one hand their Bow, and in the other, a Crowne of Palmes, which they held aloft; as for reward of him that ſhot beſt, and written about, *Neutri ſed vtrique*, and on the other ſide, were their Cifers ioyned, made of oppoſed Shafts, incloſed within a Chaplet of Myrtle, and Pomgranade, and about it, *Non niſi mutuis confodi potuere ſagittis*: which ſhee ſent to *Hipolito*, by him that had brought his letter, with this anſwere.

IF the effects of our deſires, were ſubiect to no contraction, and Fortune were alwayes obedient to our wils, the glory not onely of our actions, but of vertue it ſelfe would be defaced, the pleaſure of our hope loſt, and that of our enioying abated, and diminiſhed. Certainely, all things

things whatsoeuer must confesse themselues indebted to their contraries; because by the opposition of the one, the perfection of the other is onely best knowne. Thinke then that the sharpnesse of this absence, which our disaster makes vs now feele, is but to relish to vs, the better the sweetnesse of each others presence, when Heauen shall fauour vs to enioy it, and which we are not to feare will be long interdicted vs. But being I doe no lesse, longingly awaite the one, then I loathly abide the other: I will vow to you, that I should esteeme my selfe most happy, if I could be suffered, but to enioy the libertie of my loaneneſſe with peace. But behold the misery of my condition, being not dayly, but hourely drawne, or rather haled by force, to the satisfaction of the loathsome, and vnpleasing importunities of my tormenters; to whose subiection, the the tyranny of my fate hath too vniustly reserued mee. So as in this continuall warre,

warre, with my nature and desires, I liue so artificiall, and forced a life, as I scarce vnderstand my selfe: but beare it, forming to my selfe by such fayning, some little ease (and all that is left mee) from from the affliction of my liues houres. Liue assured of my vowes, which I will keepe inuiolable to you; and as I haue beene the first cause that your heart hath felt the force of Loues fire, be likewise assured, you shall be the first, and alone that shall euer imbrace me.

They continued all they could the commerce of their letters; in the meane time, Signior *Fabritio* wanted no counsailers to perswade his daughter, what happinesse this marriage with *Pompeio* did promise her: Shee finding which course was her best to hold, made shew of more good liking towards him then aforetimes, the which gaue great contentment to Signior *Fabritio* and *Li-*

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uia, who now eſteeming her wholly reclaimed to their wills, made her acquainted with their deſire of the diſpatch of her Marriage, preſently after the end of the Chriſtmas holy-dayes: Shee that alwayes beleeued it ſhould haue beene deferred till the end of the Carneuall, (for feare of being ſurpriſed) writ to *Hipolito* this letter following.

YOu haue alwayes promiſed me, and I haue preſumed on it, that I ſhould haue the happineſſe to ſee you before the dayes of my ſacrifice. Now knowing they are to be haſtened, and that preſently after theſe holy-dayes, I muſt into my fetters; I haue found the meanes to acquaint you with this ſad newes, whoſe euents, I hope you will preuent with your promiſe. To this I doe ſummon you, beſeech you, coniure you, by the obligation of your word, by the dutie of your loue, by the aſſurance you haue of mine, by the holy

holy oathes wee haue made, and by that respect and reuerence, you owe to those diuine powers, which our inuocation made our witnesses. You owe my misfortunes this consolation, because the hope of your contentmẽt in it was not the first, but onely cause of my consenting to this match. I will not feare you will by refusing this my first request, giue mee so iust occasion to distrust your affection, because you owe it; it lies in your power to doe it, I desire it, and there needes but your will, to the accomplishment of your due, and my satisfaction.

This letter was safely deliuered to *Hipolito*, which more afflicted him, then if it had brought him the doome of his death. And, but that hee knew it madnesse to oppose what he could not hinder (and though he could, it might bee his destruction) hee had to his vttermost laboured to haue croſt it: but

hee yeelded in his reſolution to neceſſitie, and conuenience, and ſent this anſwere.

THey are weake and cold affections, that neede ſo much chafing, and remembrance of their duties, and not thoſe who by their owne feelings are enough diſpoſed; it is not from theſe things that I would giue you the eſtimation of my obedince, but by the hazard, of as many liues if I had them, as I would wiſh there might be dayes betweene this and the accompliſhment of what you enforme mee, ſince Heauen ſhewes it ſelfe ſo intentiue to my ruine, as to haſten ſo much the time of your appointed Marriage, we muſt indure his bitter lawes. But if it meane abſolutely to triumph ouer my happineſſe, it muſt ſuddenly breake off the courſe of my life; for that onely ſhall deny me the bliſſe of your ſight, almoſt with this letter which leaues mee as full of griefes,

griefes, as I wiſh you may bee euer of contentment.

By good hap the Poſt of *Naples*, was then at *Padua*, who had brought letters and money to *Hipolito* from his Brothers, and by whom hee returned them anſwere, which gaue him the fitter commoditie to ſteale his iourney without being diſcouered. Hee went diſguized during the Chriſtmas holydayes, and by bywayes got to *Naples*, where hee arriued late in the euening, and without being knowne to any one, found the way the next morning to the Nunnery, where hee lay concealed for the ſpace of eight or tenne dayes in his Siſters Chamber; in which time *Iſabella* (who quickly heard of it) had but three times the meanes to ſee him; and then cauſed certaine workes to bee made there, which was the pretext of her viſitations. During the two laſt

whereof, the good and diſcreete Nunne left them alone in her Cabinet, two or three houres, where they employed the time about (you may imagine what) rather then to looke on Pictures. For ſo was it fit, and reaſonable, that the deere and laſt gage of the confirmation of a loue ariued to his perfection, ſhould be reſerued for him, whoſe merite and affection might beſt claime it; not for one that had but the ſhadow giuen him by the blind tyrany of fate.

A little after Twelfe day, becauſe the time of her Marriage drew neere, and his longer ſtay, could not bee but incommodious and daungerous; hee prepared for his departure, and after hauing anew repeated their old oathes, and aſſurances; and giuen each other freſh witneſſes of the affections of their ſoules, by all ſorts of lamentable complaints, that may bee occaſioned by ſo diſpleaſing a ſeparation (which they could

could not leaue off till Teares, Words, and time failed them) he left her.

Shortly after, and almoſt aſſoone as *Hipolito* was arriued at *Padua*, the long promiſed Nuptialls of *Pompeio*, and *Iſabella* were diſpatch't, with the honour of much great and Noble company, Combats, Races for prizes, Maſques, and other pleaſures vſuall in ſuch occaſions.

He that had well obſerued *Iſabella's* lookes that day (howſoeuer ſhe might diſſemble them) would haue iudged that what ſhee did then, was more by conſtraint, then out of her wils election. This alteration (apparant ſometimes in her teares, which yet ſhe ſtroue to hide) was by ſuch as perceiued it, attributed rather to the apprehenſion ſhe might haue of the change of her condition (which often troubles in ſuch occurrences, the chaſt hearts of young maides) then to the true cauſe, which

none knew of. The dauncing being ended, the Bride led into her Chamber and vndreſt, and the women that accompan'ed her, departed, ſhee retired into her inner Chamber, where in deſpite of her beſt reſolution, the force of her teares ouer-bare the ſtrongeſt oppoſition her reaſon could make Deteſting with ſobbing, and broken complaints, the fault ſhee made againſt her faith to *Hipolito*, and the more ſhee ſought to curbe her paſſion, the more violent it grew, ſo as in this conflict, ſhe was halfe diſtracted. In the end comming a little more to her ſelfe, ſhee tooke paper, and bad her maide bring her handkercher, fayning that her noſe bled, to excuſe her long ſtay; and in the meane time opened a vaine ſo well to her purpoſe, as ſhe had blood enough to write this letter to *Hipolito*.

Since

SInce my teares are not able to write my griefes, my bloud ſhall, and I would theſe were my laſt drops, that I might die as innocent in my actions, as I will for euer liue conſtant in the ſincerity of my will towards you. Which will is ſo contrary to what I am forced to, as that (but for being your command) I would ſooner haue conſented to my death, and though the offence might be excuſed through my conſtraint, yet neuerthelaſſe the extremity that forces me to the fault I commit againſt you, and againſt my ſelfe, will neuer be able to ſerue me for remedy againſt the incurable vlcer that I make in my ſoule, in being able to ſuffer that any other ſhould be partaker of that which is onely due to you, and that (as conſenting to the victory of mine enemy) I ſhould yeeld my ſelfe to him for his prey and trophy. I goe then, no, rather I am drag'd to a

loathed bed. Why did not my deſtinies rather ordaine my life for a bleeding ſacrifice vpon the altar of Diana, *then to ſlaue it to the tyranous ſeruitude of theſe vnworthy bands? from the which (if you will not) I vow death muſt be ere long the meanes of my deliuerance.*

She had onely the leiſure to end and ſeale this Letter, when her Mother who had ſtaid all that while in her Chamber, came to take her to bed and found her binding vp her hand, which ſhee fained to haue hurt by miſchance. She ſeeing her face ſo ſad and full of teares, imputed it to the anguiſh of her hurt, and to the apprehenſion that Maids vſually haue of their firſt nights enduring. But when ſhe was to go to bed, her teares brake out anew, and her Mother finding her vnwillingnes ſo great, as ſhe could hardly in a long time draw her out of that inward Chamber where

ſhe

ſhe was, ſent for her Father, and ſaid much to him that witneſt her griefe to finde things in ſo ill tearmes, and that this marriage was ingaged beyond the recouery of repentance. At length ſhe was put to bed, not without the pitie of all about her, and beliefe that onely her word was forced, not her will gained to this marriage: and had her Husband vnderſtood any thing, hee might eaſily haue perceiued in bed how the world went; but hauing no ſight but in his eies, hee could ſee no farther than their obiect. Hee ſuffered ſcornfull refuſals euen till morning, when he receiued it for a great fauour, to receiue but a kiſſe.

Some daies after the *Carneuall*, this ſolemnity laſted; and then *Pompeio* and *Iſabella* were honourably conducted to their owne houſe, where his chiefeſt abode was before. A little after, the Nunne that had conuaied

Iſabella's

Iſabella's letter to *Hipolito*, receiued, and ſent her this following anſwer.

THis is not the onely example that may teach vs that things which haue their beginnings remoued from the vulgar, and differing from the ordinary tract of the world, haue their conſequences ſo rare and ſeldome ſeene, as that our ignorance to preuent them, and the difficulty of finding out the remedies, would rather take from whom they concerne, all will to purſue them, then giue them any hope of their atchieuement. But ſince vertue ſhines moſt in the moſt difficult things, and the more things ſeeme impoſsible, the more their execution is worth the compaſsing. Let vs (deare ſoule) ſtoope, but not ſinke vnder the burden of theſe afflictions, death is a poſsible and eaſie remedy for all, ſince we haue it when we liſt in our owne power. But as it were the end of our preſent miſeries,

series, so would it be the priuation of our future happinesse. That then must be our lateſt refuge, when desperate of enioying the one, wee may thereby escape the other. Shal we throw our selues at the feet of misfortune? if we must conclude there, let me make my ruine memorable by the faire markes I shall leaue of the power loue hath in a resolued breast. Leaue me the care of what remaines, for you haue far your part but too well discharged your dutie, since all the honor of our loue hath hitherto beene yours; and hauingno other merit to answer it with, it is fit that all the smart should be mine. But we both feele that part too much: be not you weary still to loue mee, assuring your selfe my seruice shall for euer accompany the faith of mine affection, patience my misfortune, and it may be a happy euent my enterprises. Of which I hope at Easter *to come and aduise with you.*

These

Theſe Letters gaue *Iſabella* ſome comfort, whoſe ſorrowes neither the great feaſting, entertainments, viſitations of kinred, friends and neighbours, the commodities of a pleaſant and rich houſe, nor all the fondneſſe of her new Husband could any whit diminiſh; ſo much her minde laboured with the impatience of loue and deſire, with the abſence of her *Hipolito*, and with the diſpleaſure ſhe tooke at the fault ſhe accuſed her ſelfe of hauing made againſt him. In this time *Hipolito* ſent his elder Brother word that hee would viſit him at *Eaſter*, who now hauing married his Daughter, was indifferent for his Brothers returne: and he hauing receiued a leaue, came two daies before *Eaſter*; and the day after, came *Pompeio* and his Lady thither. The ioy and contentment of theſe louers at their meeting was ſo great, as bred them no little paine to diſſemble it: *Iſabella* fayning ſuch a welcome

come to her Vncle, as if his comming had beene vndream't of, and vnexpected. They were there together eight or ten daies without oportunity of any priuacy, but once, becauſe ſhe could not goe now as before without company to the Nunnery.

In this time *Hipolito* vſing the fitteſt carriage for the time and quality of his loue, addreſt himſelfe ſo well to his Nephew, and ſo woone his affection, as no mans company was ſo pleaſing and acceptable to him as his. After that, *Pompeio* and his Lady went home to their owne houſe, but not without hauing firſt drawne a promiſe and aſſurance from *Hipolito*, that hee would within two dayes ſee them: which he did, being now freed from the curioſity of many eies, and hauing only his to blind, which were of themſelues well enough ſeeled.

There was yet in the houſe an old woman,

woman, who had long liued there a ſeruant, who being the generall Key-keeper of all the roomes, and ſo went too and fro through the houſe, entred eaſily into thoſe ſuſpitions that a wicked old age is often ſubiect to, being alſo led by thoſe many appearances which loue in an vnwarie young couple (tranſported with the conuenience of an vnexpected liberty) takes not heed to preuent; and hatching this opinion without making ſhew of it to any, more narrowly watcheth their behauiours, who hauing with contentment enough enioyed ſome dayes together, concluded it at laſt better to vſe diſcreetly thoſe oportunities, than abuſe their fortune; as alſo the good Nunne had carefully aduiſed them to beware of being ſurprized in inconueniences.

Hipolito returnes to *Naples*, from whence he often viſits his Nephew for his Neeces ſake, who could not ſo well

command

command her paſſions, but ſhe muſt ſhew much more contentment in her face, when her Vncle was there, then at other times, feaſting him more then her Husband, who was ſo blinde and yeelding to them, as he would leaue them to entertaine one another (as hee call'd it) and himſelfe ſpend the whole day in hunting. Wherein *Hipolito* excuſed himſelfe, being the thing he was moſt vnfit for, and leaſt delighted in; the malice that appeared in the doubtfull lookes of this buſie old woman, began to make them diſtruſt her, ſo as *Hipolito* durſt neither goe ſo often, nor ſtay ſo long in the houſe of *Pompeio*, as before: who both tooke his ſtrangeneſſe ill, and complained of it to his Wife.

Hee gaue her leaue to goe to *Naples* to ſee her Mother, with charge to returne with her Vncle; ye may imagine this iourny was vndertaken with much gladneſſe, and the condition accepted with

with more. She remained with her a good while; fauoured with her Mothers ſickneſſe, and the commodity of often going to the Nunnery, where ſhe had euer ſomewhat or other a making for colour of her going.

During her abſence from home, an Vncle of her Husbands (ſometime his guardian, a Knight of marke and noble deſcent) came to ſee him, and his houſe, liuing at that time not farre thence; where hauing ſome daies expected his Neeces returne, thought her long ſtay very ſtrange, and told his Nephew that he was not to winke at ſuch courſes, and that ſince ſhe had brought little other aduantage to his houſe, he was to expect from her at leaſt a carefull eie ouer his domeſticall affaires, which would run into confuſion if ſhe continued this faſhion.

The malitious old woman vpon this occaſion could not containe her ſelfe from

from discouering to the Knight what she thought of her Lady, beseeching him to take it well, as comming from an ancient and faithfull seruant of that house, who could not passe ouer so great a blemish without violating her duty. He seemed to beleeue nothing of what she said, and like a subtile Fox, reproued her sharpely taxing the vildnesse of her disposition in conceiuing so false and wicked an opinion, of a discreete and vertuous Lady, and her impudence in daring to speake it to him.

The old woman in her owne excuse, told him all the particulars shee had built vpon, which sunke so deepe into the apprehension of this man, as they neuer after left him. As it is the propertie of a malitious nature, to doe injury to what it hates, (according as the passion is defined, to be a disposition of the will intentiue to the hurt of others) so this minister of hate, willing to exe-

cute her fury vpon theſe poore louers, tooke the occaſion of their mutuall affections, to exerciſe vpon them her own rage, for not being now able in her withered age, to haue the part in theſe Loue pleaſures, like one euer before liqueriſh of ſuch fruit, and now not capable of being ſatisfied, for the three ſcore and fift decreped yeere of her age, that had already disfigured her face, with a hundred foultes and wrinckles, forbad all beholders not onely the deſire, but euen opinion. Certainely, as the Childe is the ſigne of Virginitie paſt; the ſcarre, that there hath beene a wound; and *Diomedes* his ſlipper, that hee had a lame club-foote; ſo was the paſt ill life of this old woman, enough viſible in that crooked diſpoſition of her minde, that droue her forward in the ill fruites of her hate and malice, who as Priſoners ſometimes play with their Shackles and fetters, ſo not know-

ing perhaps how else to passe the time, and deceiue the languishment of a weary age, busied her selfe with the afflicting this young cupple, so shaking (as it were) the fetters of her loathed Prison and solitude. We must beleeue so; for it is most credible that in matters vncertaine, and that consist in the onely knowledge of their cause (as are these inconueniences hapning in the way of the renowne and credit of faire demeaned people) the opinions of honest mindes, will rather accorde to their honour, then suffer the rashnesse of their iudgements to conclude them vitious. If we finde some faults in the life and actions of men and women, we should rather determine them the defects, or errors of vertue, not yet arriued to the perfection, then flat wickednesses, proceeding from a setled vice; and speake of them with a modest shame, and charitable compassion of poore humane

Nature, which cannot produce creatures ſo perfect and accompliſh't, as their liues ſhall bee altogether exempt from reprehenſion, but there will euer be ſomewhat faulty and wanting.

Examples doe teach vs, that it hath euer beene an infamous, and diſhoneſt faſhion, to blot, and deſtroy the credite and fame of people, by reaſon of the importance, and conſequence of ſo many miſerable accidents that enſue thereof: for what elſe doe theſe exact obſeruers, but ſacrifice to the worlds malice (as to an euill ſpirit) their outrages; prouoking vntimely (and often moſt vniuſtly) the ſorrowes, and furies of ſuch as apprehend themſelues iniured. As the Carpenters that had the charge of the *Deliak* Galley, haue (by ſupplying, or lining ſtill the rotten and decayed ribbes, with new pieces of wood, kept it ſound and entire ſince the time it was firſt built: So certainely muſt wee doe with

with this Reputation, and it is no more hard to mainteine, and hold vp a good name and honour, then a flame, in keeping ſtill vnder it ſomewhat to ſupport, and preſerue it aliue; but when once fury, and malice haue vtterly quench't, and kild it, there is then no more hope left of recouering the one, then renewing the other, when the matter is ſpent; yet ſuch is the peruerſeneſſe of the age we liue in, and ſo many ill inclinations there are, as for a little profit, or pleaſure, they care not to ſee all things in combuſtion, and as a field full of weedes, ſo is the world in euery corner, full of vngratefull, and diſloyall mindes.

The wiſe therefore ought to be circumſpect, and as miſchiefes are like to ariſe, ſeeke to preuent them, and if not vtterly kill, and roote them out, yet keepe them vnder forgetting the maſtery of their reputations.

The wiſe (ſaid the wiſe man) receiue profit from their enemies, wherefore they at leaſt, whoſe liues are not without colour of ſuſpition, ought curiouſly to practiſe this art and ſcience.

The *Satyr* preſſing to imbrace and kiſſe fire the firſt time he ſaw it, *Prometheus* cries to him, *Satyr*, thou wilt wipe the beard off thy chinne; for it burnes being touch't, it giues (beſides) warmthe, and light, and is our moſt vſefu'l element being well and rightly vſed. So doubtleſſe, nothing in this world is ſo hurtfull, but one ſide or other, it may bee approach't and handled, and applied to ſome vſe, and profit. Fooles are the poyſon of ſocietie, but ſuch as are deſcreete and prudent, can turne to their owne profit and aduantage, and fit to their owne vſe, all the deſignes of enmitie and hatred. And euen ſo, what prooued moſt hurtfull to *Hipolito* and *Iſabella*, might haue become

come no leſſe profitable to them, if they had beene as carefull and wary as they ſhould haue beene.

To wit, in this time, that this Vncle and guardian (incenſed with what he had from the olde womans report) growes from that time vigilant and watchfull ouer them. Hee vſes meanes that *Iſabella* is ſent for, who ſoone after arriues accompanied with her Vncle; both of them reſoluing to honour this olde Gentleman, as they did. After their greetings, *Iſabella* gaue him a faire wrought Towell, and a Purſe of the Nunnes worke, and to her Husband many other little toyes; wanting no faire and probable excuſes for her tarriance. This Knight or guardian ſtayed there three dayes after their returne, prying into all their actions, and watching them ſtrictly, leauing no meanes vnſought, whereby to diſcouer their neereſt paſſages.

And as one of that age and Nation, being once touch't with a ſuſpition, yeeldes himſelfe eaſie to perſeuer in it, vpon any the leaſt appearances that may bee preſented to him; ſo, though hee perceiued none ſufficient to confirme, and ſettle his iudgement vpon, yet the inſufficiency that hee knew in his Nephew, and the diſparitie betweene his wife and him, made him diſlike the honeſt priuacies betweene her and her Vncle, although they ſtretch't no farther then might bee permitted. He reſolues before his departure to put a man to his Nephew to waite on him in his Chamber, that had beene of his owne breeding, whom hee furniſh't with all ſuch inſtructions as he thought the fitteſt to bring him to the knowledge of what hee deſired to diſcouer.

This Chamberlaine is willingly receiued of both the Husband and the Wife too, who nothing ſuſpecting him

for

for that Centinell and Watch-man ouer her, that her Vncle had designed him for, laboured to make him hers by the deserts of a good and kinde vsage. *Hipolito* of the other side, let passe no occasion that might binde him to him; but vnder the disguize of a fained affection to their seruice, and acknowledgment of his ob igation (this crafty malitious fellow) soothes, and lulles them a sleepe. Thus this young couple ingulfed in the middes of their pleasures, guided by the onely motion of their desires, foresee not the Shelues, and Rockes that threaten them with the Shipwracke and vtter losse of all their contentment.

So hurtfull often times is our happinesse, in hindring the persuite of our designes, through the sloath, negli gence, and inconsideration, with which it stupifies vs, and driues vs head-long to our ruine.

This

This Chamberlaine ſeconded with the old woman, (to whom the Knight had alſo declared his intention) had within a moneth or two, at certaine times of *Hipolito's* repaire to his Maſters houſe, perceiued ſomewhat betweene them, which hee foorthwith acquainted the Knight withall. Who thereupon goes to *Naples*, where (like enough by his meanes) there was already ſome whiſpering rumour ſpread about of this newes; and where no ſooner arriued, but without any word to his Brother *Fabritio*, or his Wife *Liuia*, of what led him thither; hee goes to the Notary; who was *Hipolito's* chiefe refuge, and tells him, that if his Brother out of hand refrained not his diſhoneſt frequentation with his Neece, hee was in danger ere long to ſmart for it, adding how much they abuſed the aduantage of their neere alliance; and that hee had not beleeued the

the firſt report of the vnlawfull priuacies that had long beene betweene them, but now was ſo vndoubtedly reſolued thereof, as hee could no longer be ignorant, or conceale them: and that (ſaue for the reſpect and honour of their houſe) he had ere then, taken ſuch reuenge as had befitted ſuch a forfaite: how hee had reuealed it to none but himſelfe onely, as one who beſt, and with leaſt ſcandall might ſtop the progreſſe of the buſineſſe, and bury it: and whoſe wiſedome hee knew of abilitie, for ſo diſcreete a conduct, and as the conſequence of the affaire required. All the allegations that the Notary could make to the contrary of this Knights opinion, and to poſſeſſe him with other beliefe of his Brother and Neece, and how there was nothing, that could be iudged more licentious betweene them, then their neere alliance permitted, ſerued to no purpoſe.

In

In concluſion, he intreated him that he might know no more ſuch faſhions in his Brother, leaſt he found his courſe more roughly interrupted then hee looked for.

This Notary miſtruſted nothing of the trueth the Knight had told him, being himſelfe a man that vſed not to condemne any kinde of this vice, and beſides, had before (as granted) warned his Brother to bee wary in the menage of his affaires, aduertiſing him how hard a matter it was for him, long to conceale them, if hee once gaue ouer their conduct, wholly to the libertie of his affections. Soone after (then) hee tells him what the Knight had diſcouered; whereupon he refrained from viſiting his Neece as before, ſaue by letters, which yet were frequent, and gaue her often newes of him. She on the other ſide (to whom writing was not ſufficient) being of a nature apt enough to

to expoſe to all dangers, her Fortune, and Life, to giue the greater proofe of her affection, to whom ſhe had vowed it; and condemning all artifice of diſſimulation, and euen diſcretion, as proceeding from a minde, too free within it ſelfe, and exempt from paſſion; full of vnreſt, could not containe her ſelfe, from diſcouering the alteration in her thoughts, but yeelded to rage, and diſpleaſure (vpon all occaſions) againſt this old woman, and often againſt her new man, of whom ſhee was now growne diſtruſtfull.

Being aduertized by *Hipolito*, of an intention hee had to accompany the Prince of *Luſignan* to *Rome*; her quicke inuention, ſupplied her readily, with a colourable occaſion to goe to *Naples*, and ſuch as her Husband was moſt willing with, there ſhee learned more particularly, all what this Knight had told the Notary, by the aduice of whom,

whom, and of the Nunne, *Hipolito* goes to *Rome*.

Iſabella's iourney was not approued of by the Knight her Vncle; and confirmed in him, and in others, the doubt into which he was entred of this Loue, and in her Mother alſo, who thought much more of it then ſhe ſpake.

During *Hipolito's* abode at *Rome*, the old Woman, and the Chamberlaine, had but few pleaſant houres, but ſtill ſhee found ſomewhat or other amiſſe in their actions: ſo as one day, this old carcaſe told her, that for being too true a ſeruant to her Maiſter, her Lady lou'd her not; and that if ſhee could haue ſeene and ſaid nothing, ſhe had liued a quieter life. This came to the Husbands eares; who ſounding not the bottome of it, paſt it ouer.

The Chamberlaine was more ſubtile, for though hee could heare it ſaid, that they were worthy of hate, that could indure

indure to ſerue in a place, where they were knowne to be onely ſet to doe baſe offices; and ſerue for candles, to light ſtrangers into all the baſeneſſe of the houſe, with much more to that purpoſe, yet, hee ſtopt eare and mouth, to all, and ſeeming to vnderſtand nothing of it, made likewiſe no anſwere to any thing.

The Knight who had beene ſtill informed of al things, came againe to his Nephew: where freely hee told his Neece, of his diſcontent at her faſhion of life, intreating her to change it, or that elſe hee was to make the World know, how vnworthy ſhe was, to hold the honour of ſuch a houſe and alliance. All her well couch't and probable ſpeeches (which the many angry teares of her great heart, would not of a long time giue paſſage to) did no whit abate the obſtinacy of this Vncle; who at length, more ſweetning his ſpeech, then altering

altering his opinion; told her, that to make her innocence appeare, and remoone all miſdoubts (ſince things were already come to ſo ill a paſſe) ſhe was by a change of life to remoone their cauſe; and that to this, there wanted but her will, by the reſolution whereof, ſhee might alwayes make her ſelfe appeare, ſuch as ſhee deſired the World ſhould iudge her. After hauing well thought of what courſe was fitteſt for her to take, ſhee had recourſe to the inforced remedy of diſſimulation; Shee ſpake not ſo much of her Vncle as before, nor ſo often commended his actions, nor curiouſly enquired after him, yet ſhee often heard newes of him, though not ſo ſecreetly, but ſtill this Chamberlaine perceiued, and tooke notice of frequent meſſages to his Lady, which his Maiſter had no word of; ſhee ſhewed her ſelfe more eaſie to pleaſe, and bee ſerued then in former times, and to

ſhew

ſhew her purpoſe of confining her thoughts, within the compaſſe of her houſe, and attend onely to the care of her domeſticke affaires, ſhee tooke the charge of them vpon her, with ſo fit and dextrous a management, that one would haue thought, ſhee had buſied the ſtudy of her whole life in them. Shee cauſed to be made her a Cabinet, or ſtudy, with the entry into it of her garderobe, or inner Chamber, and a paſſage out into the Garden of the houſe, by a narrow ſtaire-caſe glazed of either ſide, and the Glaſſe couered with falſe windowes, to ſee, and not be ſeene. She cauſed it to be Varniſh't, Gilt, adorned with Pictures, Bookes, China coffers, and other ſuch ſingularities as people that vnderſtand, and are curious in that kinde vſe to haue. There ſhe ſpent ſuch time as the company of her Husband, Strangers, and Houſhold buſineſſe left free to her. Shee went ſome-

times to *Naples*, but ſtayed not; three or foure moneths together, ſhee was conſtant to this new life, with much content to her Husband, Mother, and the Knight her Vncle.

During her *Hipolito's* abſence, ſhee cauſed to bee made a Bracelet of knots of her Haire to weare on his arme, ſtudded with Rubies, and Diamonds, with a large locke of Gold foure ſquare, and ſet with a rich ſtone at each corner, the midſt was Inameled blew, reſembling cloudes ſowen with Teares halfe hidden, and little appearing, and written about, *Conduntur non ſiccantur*, which ſhe ſent with this letter.

TO beare alwayes a face differing from my paſſions, to haue my words contrary to my thoughts, my deedes to my will, teares in my heart, and laughter in my mouth, anguiſh in my ſoule, and ioy in my lookes; diſdaine within,

and reſpect in outward appearance, to be alwayes preſent, where my minde and thoughts, are vtterly abſent, to faigne a doting affection, out of a perfect loathing. Briefe, to ſhew a full content in liuing vnder the ſubiection of a moſt contrary ſeruitude; theſe are the ordinary pleaſures of my life. Till now, the hope I gaue my ſelfe, that it might bee Heauen would in the end grow weary of afflicting vs, hath inabled me to ſtruggle with the miſeries, of this my ſtrange condition; But I muſt confeſſe, I doe now begin to feele ſo great a failing in the force of my patience, as if I finde not my ſelfe ſpeedily aſſiſted, with the demonſtration of ſome thought and care of your part for my deliuerance, I ſhall giue ouer the care of my life, for alas it were but vnprofitable to you, and to me moſt miſerable. Thinke on it, and make mee I beſeech you capable of your deliberation, and keepe with the memory of my

trueth, this pledge (perhaps my laſt) that herewith I ſend you.

This letter ſo mooued *Hipolito*, as immediately vpon the receipt of them, he returned to *Naples*, where he could not ſtay three dayes without ſeeing his Neece, with whom (after the Husbands many welcommings) hee was retained certaine dayes with more eaſe then needed.

Alas, that the firſt day could not paſſe, without reducing to them their former faſhion; they ſtirred not out of their Cabinet, the Husband was left, the care of his affaires neglected; ſuch as came to ſpeake of them, had no more audience or acceſſe: all buſineſſe, all company was diſpleaſing and troubleſome, all the Husband could haue, was after ſuppers, ſome leane entertainment, mingled oftentimes with certaine ambiguous ſpeeches, and ſmiles fauouring more

more of mockery, or contempt then otherwise: which began at last to displease him, and they perceiued it, and withall, were told by *Isabella's* maide *Iulia*, that the old Woman, and Chamberlaine, were diligent priers into their behauiours, and held hourely little counsailes betweene themselues of their actions; which made them presume, that they would not faile to giue the Knight her Vncle notice of euery thing. *Hipolito* hereupon takes new counsaile, which was (hauing informed himselfe perfectly of the secreatest meane of comming into the Garden, by a little doore out of the Parke, and thence into the Cabinet by the close staires) to returne to *Naples*, as he did, and thence fained a iourney to the Court of *Sauoy*; this is giuen out in the house, and his Brothers being aduertised of it, doe gladly furnish him with Horses, Money, and Letters of fauour to their

friends. Hee would yet carry but one Lacquey with him, whom hee wholly affied in, and with him went to a houſe of his Brothers the Notary (ſome eight miles from *Naples* where hee at that time was) from thence his *Iſabella* had newes of him; and there hee lay concealed for the ſpace of two moneths; going thence euery ſecond or third night to ſee her, hauing found by-waies into the Parke, whence he paſt into the Garden, and ſo into the Cabinet; hee arriued there commonly at nine or ten at night, meane while his man held his Horſes in a moſt vnhaunted, and remote place of the Parke, where hee awaited him till too or three in the morning, and to auoid all ſuſpition ſhee vſed before, to retire her ſelfe into her Cabinet after Suppers, and lye there alone.

From the beginning of *September*, till about the end of *October*, this faſhon held

held betweene them: But alas, the night hath eyes, and trueth is seene in the darke. 'Tis knowne *Hipolito* conceales himselfe in this house. *Pompeio's* Vncle that had vnderstood all the passage of his former iourney, knowes this last deceit too, but not the conueiance of the Cabinet. Hee growes more inraged then euer; goes to his Neece, taunts her with all the sharpest language hee had, threatning her and her *Hipolito*, with no lesse then an ignominious death: tells all to the Husband, reproaching him for his little sence of this iniury, and his want of courage to reuenge it.

And hauing sufficiently plaide his part there, goes foorthwith to *Naples*, and does there also the like, discouering all to *Fabritio* and his wife, from point to point, how euery particular had past, the warnings hee had giuen, and intreaties hee had made to them to de-

ciſt from their courſe: then inueyes againſt the Notary, who denies his Brothers being at his houſe (at leaſt to his knowledge, himſelfe being then at *Naples*) *Hipolito*, was foorthwith aduertized of this, to the end hee might not bee found there; but becauſe thoſe of the houſe, could not ſo readily be inſtructed (ſome woman and a childe affirming that hee had beene there, and was but two dayes before gone from thence) this made all the reſt credible, & after all the bitterneſſe that the diſpleaſure of ſuch an affaire could put into his words, and that hee had therewith bound his two brothers by their oathes not to receiue *Hipolito*, this Vncle left them; reſoluing to vſe all meanes to ſurprize him.

Thus, this poore miſerable Louer, beaten with ſo many tempeſts, left of his chiefeſt friends, abandoned of all hope, findes (though too late) how

ſlippery is the downe-fall of our pleaſures, and how great the diſproportion is of the ſhort contentments, and long miſeries of this life.

Hee retires himſelfe to his Brother *Scipio's* houſe, who was married ſome twelue miles from *Naples*, in the way to *Suca*. There he remained ſome daies, and after hauing reſted his wits diuerſely diſtracted, and ouerwrought with the conſideration of the extremitie hee was in, and what courſe was fitteſt to be taken, hee reſolued by the aduice of his Brother (a man more ſubtile in vice, then ingenious in vertuous matters) to cauſe diſperſed abroad, a rumor that hee was ſlaine, hoping by this meane to drowne al noiſe already ſpread of matters paſt, and lay a certaine ground whereon to build the laſt deſigne for the contentment of his Miſtreſſe and himſelfe.

Before he began to put this in execution,

tion, he ſent her a Tablet full of ſtances written vpon the ſubiect of his Fortune, couered with Gold, ſowen full of Thornes to the life in Inameled worke, and in the middeſt of either face was a Tombe of blacke Amell, and on the top of it a Semperuiue to the life, and at the foote written, *Del piacer ſepolto la ſperanza viua*; with this letter following, which the Nunne (whom he ſent it to,) cauſed it to be deliuered.

LEt not theſe accidents that combat vs, I beſeech you, driue you into deſpaire of their remedy. Beleeue me, as long as Heauen ſhall ſpare mee life, our misfortunes ſhall enioy no peaceable victory ouer vs, nor fall on vs, vnreſiſted. And ſince what you ſuffer, proceedes only through my occaſion, if my death could deliuer you; I ſhould hold it moſt happily gained; but knowing it vnauaileable, and that it would rid onely me out

of

of paine; to faigne it, may perhaps giue remedy to vs both. Let not then the newes you shall heare of it afflict you, as a trueth; though in appearance as beleeuing it. 'Tis the last, and best meane I haue resolued on, to gaine vs the freedome of our contentments: desiring therein onely, and onely aiming at your happinesse, and that I may still enioy your loue, be happy to receiue your commandements, and serue you, hauing nothing so deepely ingraued in my soule, as the faithfull obseruance I owe you; and if any remembrance shall accompany it's immortalitie, beleeue, it will bee onely that of your name, and of my obligation; the which though it bee vnpossible for mee to repay, my will at least shall neuer faile mee. But I as yet, giue you onely words, the shadow; I hope shortly, my deedes will prooue enough fortunate, to let you see the body.

Soone

Soone as *Hipolito* was ſure his Miſtreſſe had receiued his letters, hee began to play his fained *Tragedy*, certaine people are ſet on, who come betimes in the morning to his Brothers lodging, telling him that there was a man ſlaine, that night in the next Village, vpon the way to his houſe, with the Horſe hee rode on, and it ſhould ſeeme was his younger Brother. He riſes haſtily, and goes to the place whither theſe people led him, where hee found a thing truſt vp in forme of a man, which hee had cauſed to be ſtuft with haye, and dreſt vp in a ſute, his Brother had ſometime worne, cut and mangled in diuerſe places, reſembling blowes, and thruſts with ſwords, and all beſmeared with blood, and his Horſe alſo dead by him. He takes a Notary of the Village, and a Prieſt for his purpoſe, and in preſence of thoſe that conducted him thither, and ſome other of his owne people, cauſed

cauſed to bee made a verball proceſſe, how his Brother *Hipolito* had beene by them found in that place, newly ſlaine with ſo many hurts, in ſuch places, clad in ſuch a ſute, his Horſe likewiſe dead, beſide him : and inſtantly, omitting nothing that might make all credible, cauſed that bundle, or falſe man to bee buried as if it had beene the body of *Hipolito*, in the Church of that Village; puts himſelfe into blackes, and ſends foorthwith, the verball proceſſe to *Naples* to his Brothers; ere long, the death of *Hipolito* was generally bruted about, and came to the eares of *Pompeio* and his wife, who faining to beleeue it, (and the Husband beleeuing) ſeemed much to lament it.

The Winter was at that time well ſpent, when *Hipolito* hauing executed this ſtratagem, gets him diſguiſed all alone, on foote, by night, by vnuſed by-

wayes

wayes to the Parke of *Pompeio's* houſe, and lodges in his Miſtreſſes Cabinet, where hee was two dayes, there they conſulted of what was to bee done, for their deliuery out of thraldome.

It was concluded then, that they muſt reſolue for *Cypres*, or *Candy*, and that, to that effect, he would prouide a Barke, and lay it ready victualled, and furniſh't of all things fit, againſt the end of *March*, or beginning of *April* next. For this purpoſe ſhee gaue him ſuch monies as ſhe had, reſoluing withall, to employ her vttermoſt indeauour, to get together the moſt ſhee could, to make their voyage, and maintaine them after. In the meane time, they reſolued, he was to viſite her, with the oftneſt, and ſecreteſt meanes hee could, hauing prouided himſelfe, of ſome ſafe retraite for himſelfe not farre of.

Being gone, ſhee aduiſed with her ſelfe, to perſwade her Husband to make

a voyage into *France*, the peace being made betweene the Kings of *France*, and *Naples*. Shee wanted no faire inducements to vrge him with; how it was a ſhame for one of his age, & place in the world, to haue neuer ſeene other, then the angle hee was borne in: that this voyage would faſhion, and make him vp better; and yeeld him more knowne, and honoured of the beſt and Nobleſt company: that hee had not yet gained that eſteeme in the World, that hee might enable himſelfe to expect, by more inriching his minde, with experience to iudge, and abilitie to diſcourſe, in which, an infinite of others outwent him, and were therefore preferred, and reſpected before him: which both in birth and meanes, and all other things, were farre to yeeld to him: and how though his preſent eſtate in poſſeſſion yeelded him not much, ſhee would finde him enough,

without

without much preiudicing it, for that effect: that his lands were well timbred, ſo as the ſale of foure, or fiue thouſand crownes worth, would not bee much miſt: that they would leaſe out part of their lands, and make that way as much more money in incummes: and that with ſuch a like ſumme, he might make his voyage, with credit and honour: how for her part, ſhee would keepe but her maides, and one man, and to auoid expence, would retire her ſelfe to *Naples* to her Mother, who ſhee knew would thinke her company no trouble.

She gildes her language ſo well, that her Husband beginnes to reliſh the motion, and goes to his Vncle and guardian, and communicates it to him: who likes well enough of the buſineſſe; and giues the charge to *Iſabella*, to finde Merchants, and make the bargaine with them, ſaying, he would authorize

thorize her, becauſe her Husband was yet in his minoritie.

You may imagine whither ſhee beſtirred her ſelfe or no, or *Hipolito* of the other ſide, who (hauing prouided a Barke, Rigged, Victualled, and furniſh't with all things neceſſary to make the voyage into *Cypres*, vpon the firſt day of *April*) goes confidently about with his Lacquey diſguiſed, like Venetian Merchants, coaſting the Countrey, to looke out ſome place of retreite for himſelfe neere his Miſtreſſes houſe; and as there is no difficultie, but money paſſes through it, hee gaines by that baite, a Countrey fellow that dwelt in a little houſe, by a Woodes ſide; farre enough from neighbours, and onely three miles off from his Miſtreſſe, where he remained till the periode of his misfortune, faining himſelfe fled out of *Venice* for certaine debts, and that during his abſence, his friendes were labou-

ring ſome reaſonable compoſition for him, with his Creditors, his poore Hoſte, for the profit hee receiued by him, could haue wiſh't him ſtill in buſi neſſe: hauing expreſſely forbidden thoſe of his houſe, not to diſcouer him to any one, ſerued him with all things for himſelfe, and his Horſes.

When hee went by night to ſee his Miſtreſſe (which was often) hee made his Hoſt beleeue, that it was either to ſpeake with ſome that negotiated for him, or to deliuer, or to receiue letters at a place they were ſtill by appointment left.

In the meane time, *Iſabella* of her part was not idle, for hauing bargained for fiue thouſand crownes worth of timber, with Merchants that had the money ready at an houres warning, and leaſed out a great part of her Husbands lands for certaine yeeres, for the receipt of fiue thouſand more, ſhee aduertized

uertized the Knight her Vncle of it, and intreates of him to come the eighteenth of *March*, to ſee the couenants diſpatch't for his Nephew, her Huſband, at his houſe: whither hee came the ſeuenteenth day to dinner.

Hipolito, and *Iſabella* had determined (this money being receiued, and lock't vp in her Cabinet, which they made account, would be at the furtheſt by the twentieth day) to depart the night following, vpon *Hipolitos* Horſes, hee carrying his Miſtreſſe behinde him; and his man, and her maide vpon another Horſe, all laden with as much as they could carry in Money, and Iewels, and gaine that night the Port *Gaietta*, and ſtraight hoiſe vp the ſailes of the Barke that lay ready for them, accomodated at all points, as well with Linnen, Cloathes, Bookes, as all other neceſſary mooueables.

The Knights two ſpies had ſo well

watch't ouer the vnfortunate *Iſabella*, that they had heard ſome one walking and talking in the night with her, in her Cabinet, who they knew were none of her women, hauing found them both a ſleepe in her gardrobe: beſides, had further diſcouered, that *Iulia* did often times conuey meate, and wine thither, without telling for whom: and at three or foure ſeuerall times, that it had rained in the night, they had tract the footing of ſome perſon, going and comming through the Garden, to the ſtaire of the Cabinet, and thence to the Parke-gate, and the entrie thereof beaten with the footing of a Horſe.

All this is told to the Knight, ſoone after his arriuall, who without ſeeming to haue knowne any thing new, paſſes the reſt of the day in diſcourſe of his Nephewes voyage; of the traine he ſhould carry with him, of

the gouernment of his expences; and time of his ſtay abroad, and his returne.

The night being come, hee ſent one of his men to watch without the Parke gate, which was faſtned onely, but that of the Garden lock't euery night; commanding him to conceale himſelfe all hee could, and ſpeake to no man of it, and if hee ſaw any one come in that way, to bring him preſent word. That night there appeared nothing; the next morning betimes, the Marchants come, the couenants are paſt, and diſpatch't, the laſt monies receiued and lock't into *Iſabella's* Cabinet, and early enough for her to aduertiſe *Hipolito* of it, by that meane they vſed to heare from one another thoſe daies they met not, which was by leauing their letters in a hollow tree in the Parke, where they fetch't, or ſent for them at a fit houre. *Hipolito* ſent his man thither

that night at Supper time, who found a little note, containing the aduertiſement of all.

The night comming, the Knight ſends his man againe as before. Miſfortune, and miſchiefe intentiue to the ruine of theſe vnhappy louers, and meaning to ſet them for paternes to ſhew how little auailes mans foreſight, to withſtand the Heauens appointment; and that when we hold the end of our hopes neereſt, and moſt certaine, 'tis then commonly, that we feele the euents fartheſt off, and moſt contrary to our expectations: This miſchiefe (I ſay) would that *Hipolito*, who now preſumed all things ſo happily laid, as there wanted nothing but to goe to take his *Iſabella*, (and whom the long expectance of this ſo deſired houre, had made vtterly impatient of any longer ſtay) came his accuſtomed way, at nine of the clocke at night, ha-

uing

uing left his man, and Horſes in the Parke.

The Knights man hauing diſcouered them, comes to his Maſter vndiſcouered by any, tells him what hee had ſeene; hee ſends him with two more of his men with Piſtolls to make good the Parke gate, and ſtay by force ſuch as were gone in, or ſhoote them if they preſt out, they found meanes to get out vndiſcouered before the gates of the houſe were ſhut in.

The Knight went to bed, ſo did his Nephew ſoone after, and was as ſoone a ſleepe; when he knew his men gone, this Knight riſes, and ſends a Gentleman of his, whom hee kept with him, for his Nephewes man, him hee commanded, to watch and bring him word, when his Neeces maides ſhould bee gone out into her inner Chamber; which hauing done, he ſends this Gentleman of his, commanding him with

a ſword drawne to keepe the women vpon their liues, from ſtirring out of the roome they were in, or making any noiſe, or exclamation, till they were ſent for out.

Iulia was within, with her Miſtreſſe in her Cabinet. In the meane time, plants himſelfe at the doore of the Cabinet, liſtning what was done there, hee could heare ſpeaking, but not the words, opening and ſhutting of cofers, remouing of monies, and other things; at length, after a whiles ſtay, being neere eleuen of the clocke, hee heard *Iulia* comming to the doore ſaying: I will goe ſee then Madam, if all the houſe be a ſleepe, and take theſe purſes that I haue: and her Miſtreſſe anſwering her, ſtay not then, for 'tis time wee were gone; thereupon, the maide halfe opening the doore, perceiued this man, that preſſes to enter in, which ſhee ſtroue againſt, and during their contention,

tion, *Hipolito* ſaues himſelfe by the ſtaires into the garden, thinking that he not being taken, his Miſtreſſe ſhould runne no hazard: yet hee could not ſhift himſelfe away ſo ſodainely, but the Knight hauing borne ope the dore, might perceiue him ſhutting the other after him.

His Nephewes man, that he had put to him, entred the Cabinet with him; as ſoone as *Iſabella* ſaw that fellow, ſhe could not hold from flying furiouſly at his face, with ſuch iniuries, as witneſt the beliefe ſhe had of being diſcouered by him.

The Kinght ſends him to wake, and bring his Maiſter, and ſends a man hee had there of his owne in the next roome, along with *Iulia*, into the chamber himſelfe lay in, to the end, to gaine the trueth out of her, more eaſily by this ſeparation.

Nature then ſhewed ſufficiently in this

this poore Lady, how ſhee pleaſes her ſelfe, often times to ſtray from the courſe of her ordinary rules, and make to appeare in ſubiects, wee eſteeme weake and leſſe perfect, high and great effects; ſhewing vs in this woman, how farre differing a ſoule from the vulgar, and capable of rare vertues, is often found in that ſexe: and how a reſolution hauing once taken ſure footing in them, remaines commonly more firme, and immooueable, then in men; ſhe then, in this croſſe and vnexpected accident, inſtead of hauing recourſe to Teares, and Prayers, (the refuge naturall to the weakeneſſe ſome impute to women) armed her ſelfe (contrarywiſe) with ſuch an vnſtirred aſſurance, amazed her enemies: for this Vncle hauing ſet his dagger to her throate, and asking her who it was went downe the ſtaires, and whither ſhe was going, at ſuch an houre with that money,

which was part put vp into bagges and ſackes, and part ſpread vpon the table, ſhee without ſhew of amazement, told him, that it was the faſhion of a poore ſoul'd man, to ſpeake to a woman with his armes in his hand, and that without more threatning it was an eaſie matter, to kill, one who reſiſted not; that neuer Noble, nor honeſt minde, vſed to alot any part of his time, to ſo baſe occupations, as to play the hourely eueſdroper, and ſpie ouer the actions of an honeſt woman: That no body was gone downe the ſtaires, but that ſhee then ſhut that doore, when her maide opened the other to goe fetch purſes, to put vp the reſt of that money vpon the table, to be lock't vp: that her bidding of her returne quickly, that they might bee gon, was to diſpatch her ſooner to bed, becauſe it was late.

The Husband being come, was not a little amazed at the newes his Vncle tells

tells him, which before he dream't not of: yet, euen the Vncle himſelfe, beginnes a little to ſtagger in his confidence, ſeeing the conſtancy of this woman; when his man came to tell him, if *Iulia* might bee aſſured her life, that ſhe would confeſſe the trueth.

The Knight leaues *Iſabella* in guarde, with this ſeruant of his, and his Gentleman, commanding them vpon their liues, not to ſuffer her to riſe out of a Chaire, where they made her ſit; and thence, hee and his Nephew goes into the Chamber where *Iulia* was, where they were ſcarce entred, when ſhee retaining of the baſe condition of a low ſeruile heart, falls full of teares at their feete, begging pardon, which is promiſed her, vpon a true relation, of her Ladies practiſes and intent, which ſhee made, and was foorthwith brought to *Iſabella*, who beholding her with them, and looking her in the face, gueſt how

how the matter went, and forceing to riſe vp, ſaid; Ah falſe treacher, why am I not ſuffered yet before I die, to puniſh thy deteſtable diſloyaltie?

They made this maide, auouch to her all ſhe had told them.

They ranſack't her cofers, which were all open; in one of them, they found all the letters *Hipolito* had written to her, bound vp by themſelues; they found in another, her Iewels ranged together; and not farre off, two other little boxes of *Mercury ſublimate*, and other poiſons made into Pilles; in the vpper part of one of the Cheſts, they found laide in a place apparant enough to the ſight, this following Euidence, written with her hand.

I Know that the precipitation of your iudgements is ſo ſuddaine, ſo mooued with paſſion, and waying to the worſer part;

part; as that my departure ſhall bee no ſooner knowne, then blamed of you; and my ſelfe condemned as an inceſtuous adultereſſe, in leauing one, who is held to bee my Husband, to goe away with him, that is reputed my Vncle.

But I beſeech all thoſe, before whoſe eyes this Euidence ſhall come, that hauing patience to read it, they will rather ſettle their opinions vpon the certaine aſſurance of the trueth they finde in it, then vpon the falſe appearance of a common errour. 'Tis an exceeding great griefe to me, that in defence of my innocence, I muſt diſcouer both my fault, and my ſhame, and inhumanly breake open the Sepulchre, and diſeaſe the bones of the dead, taint the honour, and blemiſh the memory of her that brought me into the World: But ſince I haue onely this meane, whereby to waſh off the ſtaine of my reputation, I beſeech her Ghoſt to pardon mee, and both God and men not

to impute to impietie, and ingratitude, what I am compelled vnto, through neceſſitie, and for my iuſtification.

It is knowne, and I haue learned, that the Lawes doe ſay, that onely the conſent makes the Marriage; which conſent cannot proceede but from a voluntary and free will, and exempt from all force, and conſtraint, the which being vſed therein, forbids what ariſes thence, to bee called a conſent of the will; and conſequently barres all poſsibilitie of eſtabliſhing a Marriage vpon the contrary of that whence onely it ought neceſſarily to come.

There is not any one that hath beene practiſed with any frequency in the buſineſſe of our houſe, but muſt needes know, what artifices, ſubtilities, what authoritie, and force, what threatnings and ill vſages, my Father (or hee whom I did eſteeme for ſuch) and thoſe of whom I depended, haue vſed towards mee, to make

make mee condeſcend to the Marriage with Signior Pompeio; *their force and conſtraint, had the power to make mee his Concubine, not his wife; my will contracting it, and the abilitie of becomming ſo, being taken from mee, hauing promiſed, and giuen my ſelfe before for wife to* Hipolito.

And ſince the Lawes permit ſuch as enter into any Religion by force, who both doe, and ſweare the obligation of thoſe vſuall vowes; ſince the Lawes (I ſay) doe giue them, the abilitie to diſpence with thoſe, and giue ouer their orders; why ſhall not Marriage haue the like power, whereof the promiſes cannot binde thoſe more ſtrictly who make them to men, then the vowes of Religion doe thoſe that ſweare them to God? I am not ignorant, that the common opinion euery one hath, that Hipolito *as Brother to my Father, and therefore my Vncle does thereby conclude my Marri-*

age

age with him vnlawfull: But it is not ſo long ſince, but I may entreate ſome yet of this age to remember, that about eighteene, or twentie yeeres ſince, the King ſent to Naples the Marqueſſe of Coria, a Spaniard, who ſtayed there ſome time, during which, he made loue to my Mother, and gained ſuch intereſt in her, as that during the abſence of Signior Fabritio her Husband, in a Voyage hee made to his Holineſſe, his affection had arrived to what the affections of men doe vſually pretend. For in this time I was begotten: I call God to witneſſe of my wordes, and that I ſpeake a perfect trueth. My Mothers Nurſe, and her Siſter in Law the Nunne, are yet both liuing, who are neither of them ignorant hereof.

But to alledge a proofe, that may at all times bee produced, I aſſure my ſelfe, there may bee found among the Regiſters of the Towne-Treazor, the day of the

departure of Signior Fabritio *to* Rome, *and of his returne to* Naples; *and by his charges, and their diſcharge in his imployment, and the expedition hee obtained of his* Holineſſe, *may be ſeene the day of my Birth in his papers, and that of my Baptiſme in the Regiſters of the Church where I receiued it.*

Let theſe bee brought, and it will bee found that it cannot bee I ſhould bee his Daughter; ſince by the immooueable Lawes of Nature, a childe (to liue) muſt of neceſsitie bee borne either vpon the ſeuenth, ninth, or eleuenth moneth after Conception: And ſo farre was it from any of theſe, as in the beginning of the eight after his returne, I was borne; a time altogether inſufficient, and incapable of giuing life to a childe.

Being not Daughter to Fabritio, *I am not Neece, nor of kinne to* Hipolito; *Now ſince freedome and libertie begets the will; the will conſent; and conſent the*

the Marriage; and that all this hath giuen me for wife to Hipolito: Since no alliance can bee any barre betweene vs; since force, or violence drawes, or workes no obligation; and since by that onely, I was cast vnder the bondage and seruitude of Pompeio: why shall it not bee lawfull, for mee to redeeme my libertie, from the vniust vsurpation, of him that hath too long abused, and enioyed by violence, what was none of his; and restore my selfe, into the hands of him to whom God, the Lawes, my Election, and my Faith hath giuen me.

The contentment that I giue my selfe, in being able to worke my release from mine enemies; makes me resolue to suffer with cheerefulnesse, all the iniuries of Fortune, of the Heauens, of the Time, of Necessitie, and all that can happen me in a strange Clime: Where resolued to goe confine my selfe, and end the rest of my dayes; I beg of my friends no

more, then to forget my name, and imagine me dead.

This Euidence being read, ſhee was asked, what ſhee intended with thoſe poyſons; ſhe ſaid, ſhee made them to take, if ſhee were purſued ſo narrowly, as ſhee could not ſaue her ſelfe; to the end, to barre her enemies the contentment, and preuent the miſchiefe of falling aliue into their power.

After ſhee had confeſt much more, and more voluntarily, then ſhee was queſtioned; the Vncle ſaid; ſince you determined to bee your owne executioner, and puniſh your owne diſhoneſtie; it were pitie (though you haue beene preuented in the execution of ſo wicked an enterpriſe) that you ſhould bee fruſtrated too, in the iuſt puniſhment, you haue ſo well deſerued, and ſo prouidently prepared for your ſelfe; and therefore you are ſpeedily, by the meane

meane of your owne appointment, to receiue your death; where-with, taking one of the pilles, which her Vncle preſented her; ſhee anſwered them; it is for them that haue either pleaſure, or deſire of life, to ſeeke the meanes to keepe it; and for ſuch as haue loſt both the one, and the other, to haſten the end of it, and flie to death, which is ſo farre from being a thing odious to mee, (being depriued of my *Hipolito*) as that (were ye as inclinable to pitie, and ſhould deny it mee; as you are bent to cruelty, and to giue it me) I would beſeech you, to let mee take it with my owne hands.

Now after all the trecherous, and ignoble courſes you haue taken againſt me; I muſt confeſſe my ſelfe much bound to you, for ſhortning my miſerable life, whoſe end, is as pleaſing to mee, as the courſe hath beene vnfortunate: hoping that as God doeth af-

foorde you by this meane, the triumph of your deſires ouer me, and mee the end of my afflictions; hee will alſo pleaſe to giue my ſoule her reſt in eternall bliſſe, which I humbly craue of him, and that the long paines of my life, and vniuſt Martyrdome of my death, may obtaine mee his pitie, and my ſinnes their pardon.

Shee ſpake theſe words, with ſo reſolute, and vnmooued a face, and faſhion, that all thoſe about her, were ſeized with aſtoniſhment, and pitie.

Her Vncle himſelfe, and Husband began to ſpeake to her, teſtifying a moderation of their doome, and rage; when ſhe ſwallowed the Pill, and with a nimble hand taking two more, ſaid; One is too few, and nothing is hard to doe that giues vs contentment, and barres our enemies the pleaſure of a long vengeance.

Soone after, the force and quantitie of

of the poyſon wrought his effect; and ſeizing all the Vitall parts, left her onely power to ſpeake theſe laſt words: Receiue, receiue, my *Hipolito*, theſe laſt proofes of my affection; and know by my death, what power a faithfull loue hath in a ſoule reſolued: and vpon that word yeelded vp the ghoſt, in the ſame chaire, where they had ſet her: leauing her memory no leſſe admirable, for the conſtancy of her end, then remarkeable, for the bouldneſſe of her deſperate enterpriſe.

Here (Reader) with *Iſabella's* end, would I end too; ſo wearied I am, with the already too ſad relation, of theſe vnhappy Louers fortunes, and moſt vnwilling to adde hereto, the lamentable end of the poore *Hipolito*, whom my Authour tells mee, his *Iſabella's* death, made ſo deſperat a deſpiſer of his owne life, as to forſake all his hopes, meanes of ſuſtenance, friends and

and allies, and die an exile to his Countrey for her reuenges ſake.

For I finde that within few weekes after her death, hee ſlew her Husband, and his Vncle vpon their way, in a iourney to *Rome*; for which fact, neither his Brothers (who being queſtioned about him, were driuen to much trouble for him) nor any other friend, or his Countrey durſt owne him: but hee was conſtrained (being oppreſt with extreame want) to returne himſelfe, into the State of *Venice*, where fiue yeeres after *Iſabella's* death, to auoide ſtaruing, he was inforced to Marry a Widdow, that had ſome reaſonable meanes to ſuſtaine him a while with, but no more then what hee had in a ſhort time ſo farre waſted, as ſhee (as well out of diſcontentment thereat, as alſo diſcouering perhaps withall, the many degrees of compariſon betweene the loue ſhee found hee bore her, and might

might imagine, hee might beare to an *Iſabella*, or one more worthy of him, then ſhe, who was neither handſome, nor well natured) poyſoned him, as it was thought, with a meſſe of broath, ſhee cauſed to bee made for him one morning, that hee had taken a little Phyſick, for ſome indiſpoſition of body he complained of.

There was found in his Study, after his death a table, which it ſeemed, hee had not long before cauſed to be made, wherein there was Painted his *Iſabella*, lying along dead, with her eyes cloſed, and himſelfe, kneeling at her feete, with certaine verſes vnder written; ſpeaking (it ſeemes) to her eyes. The verſes were to this purpoſe.

Sleepe

SLeepe in your lids (ye loued ſhades
Of my vail'd Sunnes;) I vow
'Tis not to ſpare my bloud, that thus
I ſpill my teares on you.
Griefe and affliction (onely due
To me) are iuſtly bent
To giue me a waſting life, t' indure
A laſting languiſhment.
That when mine eyes can weepe no more,
My heart might bleede; and I,
(Becauſe I liu'd the longer life)
A longer death might die.

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FINIS.